



NICK CARTER WEEKLY

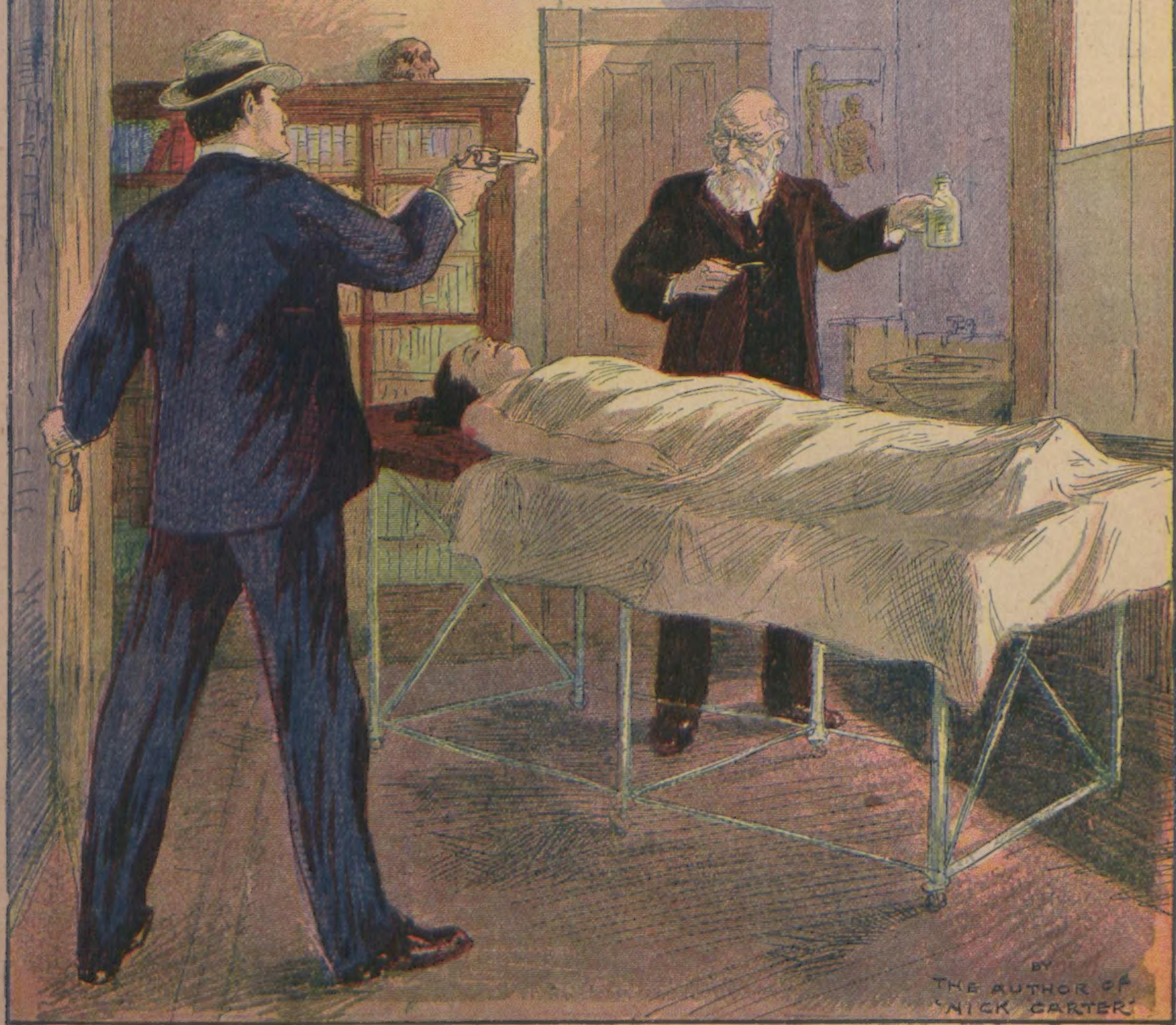
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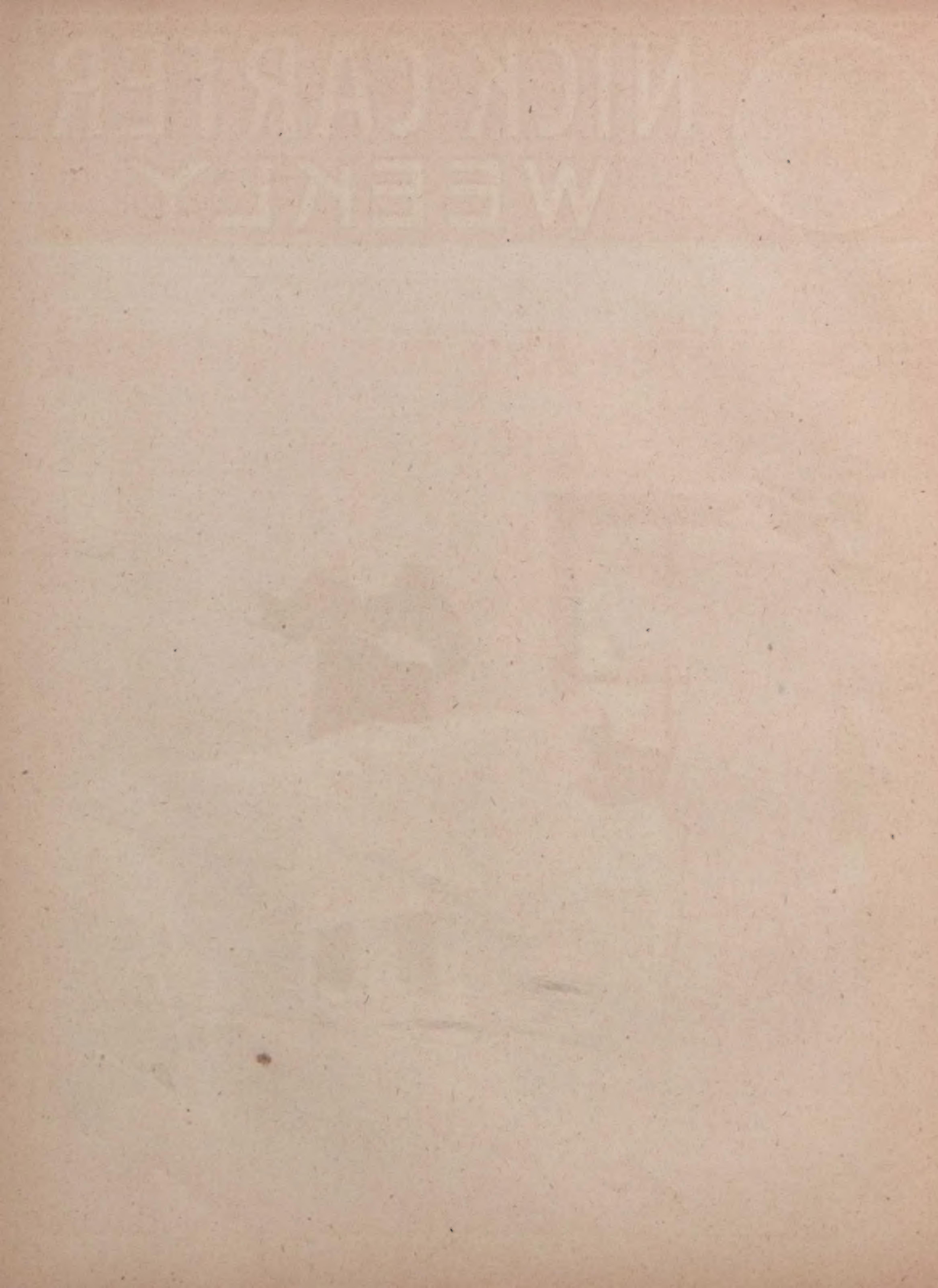
NICK CARTER AND THE PROFESSOR

OR
SOLVING A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM



BY
THE AUTHOR OF
"NICK CARTER"

"SHOOT!" SAID THE PROFESSOR, SCORNFULLY. "I WILL DROP THIS FLASK, AND THE GAS IT CONTAINS WILL KILL YOU INSTANTLY."





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NICK CARTER AND THE PROFESSOR;

OR,

Solving a Scientific Problem.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

VILLAINOUS WORK.

"Sh!"

Silence.

Then, after a pause:

"What is it?"

"I thought I heard a watchman coming."

Another interval of silence.

Two men, kneeling, held their breath.

"It must have been the wind in the leaves."

"Yes. Go ahead."

The faint grinding noise that had come from their operations was resumed.

One of the men was turning a drill, boring a hole in the lock case of an iron grating.

The other knelt beside him trying to watch the

work in the darkness, and listening for sounds of danger.

The iron grating was a door set in a wall of solid granite that rose to a height of about ten feet.

Above the door was chiseled in big letters, the name:

HAWLEY.

The granite wall was in the side of a hill.

All around were other granite walls, some of them like it, while others were of different shape.

But all had iron doors.

In every direction were ghostly white shapes standing like faithful, never-tiring sentinels over the homes of sleepers.

There were figures of angels, statues of soldiers, tall, straight shafts of marble, and plain, square slabs.

Pathways led among them, and, wherever there was a slab or a monument, therç was a mound covered with carefully-trimmed grass or flowers.

It was, then, not a bank vault that these cautious workers were trying to break into, but a tomb.

Ghouls were at work, and they were plying their villainous trade in a place where lie some of the most noted men that ever lived in America.

It was the famous Mount Auburn Cemetery, just outside of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

At the bottom of the slope where they were working was the Charles River.

A high, iron fence guarded the cemetery along the bank.

At a point where the fence ran close to the river, and concealed in the bushes that grew there, was a large, flat-bottomed rowboat.

It was drawn partly up on land, and on that end of the boat a man sat waiting.

A mile down the river, and on the other side, where there was also a thick growth of bushes, was a horse and a covered wagon.

Beside the horse, with his hand on the bridle, was a man, and he, like the man on the boat, was waiting.

There was a watchman at the entrance to the cemetery, and others were making the rounds of the main paths.

Once a watchman came near the place where the ghouls were at work.

They heard him in time.

Instead of running, they dropped flat upon the ground and lay perfectly still.

The watchman passed within twenty feet of them.

He heard no sound, and, in the darkness, lie could not distinguish their bodies from the ground.

After he had gone far on, one of them crept to the top of a tomb and looked all around.

He could see nothing moving, and he heard no footfalls.

Then he crept back to his companion and the work went on.

At last the hole was drilled.

The ghouls did not fill it with powder and blow the lock to pieces.

That would have brought watchmen to the spot in a hurry.

For the breaking of this lock they had a better plan.

A small steel instrument, almost like a hook, was pushed into the hole and turned about.

In a moment the tumblers of the lock were displaced, and, after a few trials, the bolt was shot back easily.

They opened the door.

The hinges creaked so loudly that they were frightened.

Shutting the door again, they crept hastily away and lay down behind a grave.

Several minutes passed before they stirred.

Then, as nobody had come near, they cautiously returned to the tomb.

The noise of drilling had been deadened a good deal by dropping oil on the iron.

They had a small oil can with them for this purpose.

It was used now to stop the hinges from creaking. A few drops did the business.

The door was opened again, this time silently, and the ghouls went inside the tomb.

For the first time, then, they used a light.

One stood in the doorway and held his coat out with both hands to cover the opening as much as possible.

The other stood with his back to the door and struck a slow-burning match.

The flame burned blue before it came to the wood, and sent up such a cloud of sulphur smoke that the man coughed.

His companion coughed under his breath.

"You'll queer the whole game!" he muttered.

"Shut up!" whispered the other.

The flame caught the wood, and, for an instant, they could sec from end to end of the small, gloomy room.

It was only an instant, for the man blew the match out at once.

"Here it is," said he, stepping to one side.

"Sure it's the right one?" asked the other.

"It's the smallest one, and the only one that has no dust on it," was the reply.

"And it's on top, I suppose."

"No; they're all on the floor."

The man who had stood in the doorway joined his companion, and together they lifted a casket and bore it outside.

They closed the door, and left things apparently as they had been before they went to work.

Having put their tools in their pockets, each went to the top of a tomb and looked around.

Nothing could be heard, except the rustling of the wind in the leaves.

They saw nothing but the dim monuments near by, a black level stretch below that they knew to be the river, and on the hill beyond the street lights of Brighton.

Apparently the watchmen were not stirring.

They met again before the Hawley tomb.

"I wonder what time it is?" whispered one.

He took out his watch, but it was too dark to see the hands on the face.

"We'd better chance it now," returned the other. "We timed the work carefully, and, unless it has taken longer than we thought, it's now just about midway between the watchmen's rounds."

"All right, then; lift!"

Both stooped over the casket, raised it and started down the slope toward the river.

Twice they set it down to rest. Another time the hill was so steep that they had to slide it down a bank.

At last they stepped from a narrow path upon a broader one that ran along near the fence.

Just as they were crossing it, they were startled by hurrying steps close by.

"You scoundrels!" exclaimed a voice; "stop!"

Without a word they dropped the casket and jumped.

One leaped toward the fence, the other darted back among the graves on the hillside.

The watchman who had discovered them at their horrible work just in time, as he thought, ran to the casket.

"The fiends!" he muttered, stooping over it, "I wonder what grave they——"

He did not finish, for a fearful blow on the back of his head dropped him with hands outstretched across the casket.

The ghoul who had leaped toward the river had gone no more than a few feet.

He had stopped then behind a bush.

As soon as the watchman ran past, he had crept out, and, when the watchman bent over the casket, the ghoul had raised a slingshot in the air and brought it down with all his might.

For an instant the ghoul stood back with his arm half-raised to strike again.

As the watchman's body was motionless, he bent over and felt of the head where the blow had fallen.

"Broken," he muttered.

Then he stood up and gave a low whistle.

Cautious steps came from the graves on the hillside.

"Did you finish him, Jerry?" asked a low voice.

"He's done for," was the reply. "Quick! before another one comes along."

Another voice came from the darkness.

It was close to the fence.

"Hello!" it said; "what's the matter?"

"Nothing," replied Jerry. "Had to soak a watchman, that's all. Get ready for us."

"I'm all ready."

The newcomer was the man who had been waiting with the boat.

Jerry and his companion inside the cemetery lifted the unfortunate watchman's body and bore it to the fence.

The man outside had yanked away two of the iron posts of the fence that had been cut through and loosened earlier in the night.

Thus an opening was made large enough for a man to pass through.

Jerry pushed the head and shoulders of the watchman through, and the man outside took hold and pulled.

"Put him in the boat," whispered Jerry.

Without waiting for a reply, he and his companion returned to the casket.

They picked it up again and bore it to the opening in the fence.

After they had pushed it through, they crawled out themselves, and set the fence posts so that they looked as if they had not been disturbed.

A minute later the casket was in the boat, and two men were pulling softly at the oars.

The third sat in the stern and steered with a paddle.

A few minutes passed.

The boat was in midstream and was pointed downward.

"This will do," said the man in the stern.

The oarsmen stopped rowing, and the boat drifted.

Jerry picked up a large stone from the bottom of the boat.

A long, water-soaked rope was tied to it.

The stone was the boat's anchor.

"We ought to have got another, or a heavier one," said Jerry, testing its weight.

"It will hold him down for a day or two, won't it?" asked one of the others.

"I guess so, unless the rotten rope breaks. Anyhow, we can't risk going to shore for another. It will have to do."

So saying, he tied the rope around the body of the watchman.

When this had been done, the body was lifted over the side and dropped.

All three leaned over silently for a moment.

"Sunk all right," remarked Jerry. "Pull away."

The boat glided on.

There is no traffic on the Charles River at night, at least along that part of it between Cambridge and Brighton.

Nevertheless, the men rowed most cautiously.

Not a splash was made by their oars, and not a word was spoken.

At last the steersman dug his paddle hard into the water and the boat swung in toward shore.

"Up oars," he whispered, and next moment the forward end of the boat grated on the muddy bottom.

A voice on land whispered:

"Got a cargo all right?"

"Yes," answered Jerry, shortly.

The oarsmen got out and pulled the boat further up.

Then they lifted the casket out and carried it to the covered wagon that had been waiting there for hours.

It was put inside, and two of the men got in with it, pulling the leather flap of the wagon fast behind them.

Jerry pushed the rowboat with all his might back into the stream.

He watched it until the current took it from view in the darkness.

Then he got up on the front seat of the wagon with the man who had been waiting with it.

There wasn't any too much room for him, because a good deal of the space was taken up by milk cans.

If anybody had seen the wagon, as doubtless some persons did in the early morning, as it was driven at a moderate pace toward Boston, he would have supposed that a farmer was coming in from the country with a load of milk for city customers, and that a friend or helper was riding with the driver.

The outfit certainly looked innocent enough.

CHAPTER II.

THE HAWLEY MYSTERY.

To NICHOLAS CARTER, Waldo House, Worcester, Mass.:—Can you come to Boston at once? If not, wait letter. Answer.

JAMES FIELDING.

This was the telegram handed to Nick as he was at breakfast in the hotel named.

It was on the morning after Nick and Chick had made important arrests.

They had captured a swindler, Guy Preble, and his Indian servant, Penola.

The case against them had taken such shape that Nick had had them locked up on a charge of attempted murder.

He was staying in Worcester for the purpose of appearing against them when they were brought before a judge for examination.

That is a necessary part of detective work, and one that often takes a good deal of time.

On this occasion, it was possible that Nick would have to stay in Worcester two or three days, and it was also possible that he could get away early.

All depended upon what Preble, the chief prisoner, would say when he was brought to the bar.

The telegram was from one of the detective's best friends.

Nick tossed it across the table to Chick, remarking:

"It's a case, and probably a good one, for Fielding knows me too well to bother me with small affairs."

Then he took the pad the telegraph messenger had with him and wrote this answer:

"I will wait your letter."

Soon after breakfast the detectives went to court.

Much to their satisfaction, the Preble case was called early, and by noon they were done with it.

"If I could have foreseen this," said Nick, as they were on their way back to the hotel, "I would have wired Fielding that I would see him in Boston, for, if he hasn't anything that interests me, we could have started for New York on the five o'clock train."

"Perhaps his letter has come by this time," suggested Chick. "If he wrote promptly, he could have got it on the ten-o'clock train that passed here more than an hour ago."

"That's so. We'll look for his letter."

But they did not do so, for, as they entered the hotel, Fielding arose from a chair in the office and spoke to them.

"I thought," he said, hurriedly, as he took Nick's hand, "that it would be better to come myself than send a letter."

Then he shook hands with Chick.

"What's the trouble?" asked Nick.

"Nothing, so far as I am concerned," replied Fielding. "I want to interest you in a friend of mine who has trouble enough for two."

"Come up to my room and tell me about it."

They went upstairs, and, when they were alone, Nick said:

"Now, Jim, you know me of old. See if you can tell your story straight from the beginning; and I'll bet a cigar with Chick," he added, smiling, "that you can't do it."

Fielding did not smile.

"I won't take the bet," said Chick.

"It's all right for you two to joke," said Fielding, "but I can't, for it's a sad affair, and I'll admit that I don't quite know what the beginning of it is."

"Well, start in anywhere, then."

"All right, Nick. The man I want you to work for doesn't know that I am laying the case before you. If you undertake it, I don't think I shall tell him. But there has been a big reward offered, so that you needn't fear of losing anything."

"Never mind that part of it, Jim; get down to the case."

"This man is a friend and neighbor of mine named Milton Hawley. Two weeks ago to-day his fifteen-year-old son died. He was buried in the family tomb at Mount Auburn. Ten days ago the tomb was broken into and the casket in which George Hawley's body had been placed was taken away."

"By whom?"

"That is what we don't know."

"Ah!"

"On the same night a watchman employed in the cemetery disappeared, and nothing has been seen of him since."

"Is he suspected of robbing the grave?"

"Suspicion naturally turned upon him at first."

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"When you say that do you mean to say that he is no longer suspected?"

"That's about it. Of course, there are those still who believe that the watchman was guilty."

"But you don't believe it."

"No, I don't."

"Why not?"

"Because, and here is where the real mystery comes in, nobody has tried to win the great reward that has been offered for the recovery of the body."

"I don't quite understand."

"Why! if the watchman had stolen the body it must have been for the purpose of getting the big reward he knew Hawley would offer for restoring it."

"I don't know about that," said Nick; "ghouls don't usually rob graves for the purpose of getting rewards for the return of the bodies. They almost always have another kind of reward in mind to induce them to the crime."

"You mean that they are usually paid by medical students who want bodies to operate on."

"Yes."

"Of course, I have thought about that, as has everybody else. Now, listen to this, Nick. When a body is stolen for the dissecting table, it isn't cut up instantly, is it?"

"No. It is often several days."

"Very well. It happened that the disappearance of the body was noticed on the very morning after it must have been taken—that is, on the morning when it was known that the watchman had disappeared."

"I'm following you."

"I'll tell this part of it in regular order. The watchman—Brown was his name—did not report at the expected time. The superintendent of the cemetery noticed that, but another hour was allowed to pass before anything was done.

"Then all the watchmen went on a hunt through the burial grounds for Brown.

"They found no trace of him.

"The search was kept up until daylight.

"Then one of the men, in going near the Hawley tomb, saw that the door had been tampered with.

"He investigated and found that the lock had been broken.

"Of course; he reported that fact, and then the discovery was quickly made that the casket containing the body of young George Hawley had been taken away.

"Mr. Hawley was notified by telegraph.

"It was still so early that he was not yet up.

"He went straight to Mount Auburn, but he paused on the way to put in an advertisement offering a reward of twenty-five thousand dollars for the recovery of the body, or information leading to that."

"Well!" interrupted Nick, "Mr. Hawley acted like a man of sense and determination."

"I was sure you would say so," responded Fielding. "Now, the point is that the news of the body-snatching and the reward offered were printed and announced all over Boston and that part of the State before noon, for the evening papers made an extra of it. Of course, the next morning's papers had long accounts of the matter, too, but it is not to be doubted that the thieves saw or heard of that reward before evening."

"I should say that was likely," said Nick.

"Very well; do you suppose the body-snatchers got anything like twenty-five thousand dollars from medical students?"

"Of course not."

"And wouldn't the mention of such an immense reward lead the ghouls to do everything in their power to return the body, and so get the money?"

"Yes."

"And suppose," continued Fielding, earnestly, "the body had already been delivered to a medical student. He would have seen the offer of reward also, and isn't it likely that he would have tried to win it?"

"It's a good argument," admitted Nick; "what does it lead to?"

"Why, that the body was taken for some very unusual purpose. That there's a mystery there of the darkest nature—a mystery that is worthy of Nick Carter's brain to solve it."

The detective smiled a little.

"You've done pretty well, Jim," he said. "I am interested, I confess."

"Then you'll undertake——"

"Don't hurry me, old man. I admit that there seems to be a deep mystery. A rather mixed one, too. The disappearance of Brown is a bothersome complication."

"I don't believe," said Fielding, "that the disappearance of Brown had anything to do with the matter."

"So? Why?"

"Because, if Brown stole the body he would have sent some word to Hawley. He wouldn't have waited all this time in silence. I think it more likely that Brown wandered away in a fit of insanity and that he happened to go wrong just on the night when this crime was committed."

Nick looked thoughtfully at his friend, but said nothing.

"I see you don't agree with me," said Fielding. "I don't care about that, for I want you to have your own theory. The important point is, Nick, will you work for that reward?"

"No."

"What!" exclaimed Fielding, deeply disappointed; "I had hoped that for old friendship's sake——"

"That's quite another matter," interrupted the detective. "I was going to ask you why you brought the case to me? You said that Hawley did not know that you were going to do so?"

"I'll tell you," replied Fielding. "I've known Hawley as long as I have you, and I think a great deal of him. He and his family are suffering terribly over this, and, now that the local detectives have all failed, I thought I couldn't do a better turn for my friend Milton Hawley than by getting my friend Nick Carter to get to work on this mystery."

The detective nodded.

"That satisfies me," he said. "For old friendship's sake, Jim, I'll tackle this matter, which I might do anyway, for it interests me as a mystery."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Nick."

"But don't get your hopes up, Jim. I'll tell you the main reason why I said I wouldn't work for that big reward."

"Well?"

"Because, to win the reward the body must be found or information given that will lead to its recovery. That's right, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And that reward cannot be earned, because the body no longer exists."

CHAPTER III.

A LIGHT THAT DARKENS THE MYSTERY.

Fielding opened his eyes wide.

"It was embalmed by a very skillful undertaker," he said.

"Doubtless; but I will go further and tell you that I believe that within twelve hours after the grave was robbed, the body of young George Hawley ceased to exist."

"That's a startling statement, Nick, but it shows that you have a theory."

"Not necessarily. In fact, I haven't any; but I don't want to make a mystery of my thoughts to you, Jim, and I'll explain."

"I wish you would."

"It's very simple, and I may be mistaken, but I merely carry out your own theory."

"I don't see."

"The body was stolen probably some time between midnight and daybreak. The offer of a reward was published by noon, but it may not have been seen by the guilty party till a few hours later. By that time the body had been destroyed. If it had not been, it is pretty certain that some attempt would have been made to restore it and get the reward."

"That's so; I hadn't thought of that."

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"And that leads the way to a possible theory. I admit right now that I don't think the body was taken for the use of a medical student. There is one other explanation: it may have been taken by some dirty mean enemy of Mr. Hawley for the purpose of making him suffer. Such a man would not be tempted by the big reward."

"You might as well give up that theory, Nick."

"Why?"

"Because I thought of it myself, and made an investigation."

"Good, Jim! How did you go about it?"

"I talked over it a little with Hawley himself, and at great length with Professor Drummond."

"Who's he?"

"Another friend of mine, and a very intimate friend of Hawley. He knows more about Hawley than any man living. For years he was Hawley's family physician."

"And what does the professor say?"

"That he cannot think of anybody who could have cause to hate Hawley."

"A man might imagine he had cause."

"I know; but Drummond can think of nobody who might fancy that Hawley had injured him."

"You see, Nick, Hawley has led a very quiet life. He was born rich, and never was in business, never went into politics, never got in any man's way."

"Well, you seem to have made a pretty good investigation of that point, but I shan't give it up entirely."

"Of course not! Drummond and I expect you to see things that we have missed."

"Oh! then Drummond knows that you were coming to me?"

"Certainly; I forgot to state that. We have talked the matter over a great deal, and I want you to talk with him. We are Hawley's nearest neighbors. Drummond lives on one side and I on the other. The professor and I agreed that the most expert work was necessary. This morning I read in the papers about your capturing a crook here in Worcester, and the paper gave your hotel address."

"I went at once to Drummond's house."

"Here's our chance," said L. "I know Carter, and think I can get him to take up the case."

Drummond, of course, thought the reward would be enough to tempt you, but no matter about that. He agreed heartily that it would be wise to put the matter in your hands.

"If he takes the case," said Drummond, "ask him to call on me. I should like to meet him."

"You see, he's heard of you, Nick."

"So have a good many other people, Jim," the detective remarked, dryly.

"But you'll call on him, won't you?"

"Oh, of course; what's he professor of?"

"He used to be connected with one of the medical schools in Boston, but he retired years ago."

Nick looked at his watch.

"Ten days after the crime was committed," he said, thoughtfully. "Rather unfortunate, that; but it can't be helped. The thing is not to let another day pass without work of some kind."

He picked up a newspaper and looked at the railroad time-tables.

"Next train for Boston," he went on, "goes at two and arrives at three. That will give time for a visit to Mount Auburn. Then I can go to see Drummond, unless I strike a clew at once, which is most unlikely. Where are you living, Jim?"

"In Malden, just north of Boston."

"I know."

"Hawley, Drummond and myself have houses on the hill at the edge of the great State park known as Middlesex Fells."

"Well, that's where you were living when I called on you some six years ago, isn't it?"

"Sure! I'd forgotten that you had been there."

"Then I know just how to find you. We'll have luncheon here and go up to Boston together. I shall want you along. Chick."

"All right, old man."

"Two heads will be better than one in this case. The most we can hope to do is to find what became of the body, and I must say it looks pretty hard."

The men had lunch together, and in due time were on a train that was entering Boston.

When it stopped at the Back Bay station, a newsboy came on board with evening papers.

Nick bought one.

He had hardly glanced at it when he passed it to Fielding with a queer look in his eyes.

Fielding took the paper and started at sight of a lot of heavy headlines covering half the first page.

Some of them were:

THE RIVER GIVES UP ITS DEAD!

Brown, the Missing Mount Auburn Watchman, Found at Last.

One Part of the Hawley Mystery Cleared Up, But the Main Problem Remains as Dark as Ever.

The newspaper account went on to tell how a body in a bad state of decomposition was found in the Charles River at daybreak that morning.

A rotten rope some twelve feet long was tied around it.

The body was taken to the morgue, where it was soon identified as that of Brown, the missing Mount Auburn watchman.

This was made certain beyond any doubt by the man's badge and by articles that were found in his pockets.

The face could not have been recognized.

A coroner's physician had made an examination and reported that a deep wound had been found in the back of the skull.

Evidently it had been inflicted with a blunt instrument.

The skull had been broken, and, in the doctor's opinion, the blow had caused instant death.

There was no evidence of other violence.

The newspaper told again the few facts that were known concerning the robbery of the Hawley tomb, and concluded with the statement that, while the

morning's discovery showed what had become of Brown, it threw no light upon the main mystery.

"Who took the body of young George Hawley," said the paper, "and what was done with it, are as far from being known as ever."

Fielding read the account through and passed the paper back to Nick.

"What do you think of it?" asked the detective.

"I'd a good deal rather hear what you think," returned his friend, "but I know you won't tell me till you get good and ready. I can't see that there's anything to think. The paper seems to tell it all."

"Probably the paper tells all that is known," said Nick, "but it is mistaken when it says that the finding of Brown's body throws no light on the main mystery."

"Then, do you begin to see the truth?" asked Fielding, eagerly.

"No, no!" replied Nick, "for the unpleasant fact is that, while this discovery does throw light on the mystery, it throws it in such a way as to show what a hard problem it is."

"Good gracious! that's discouraging."

"Hardly, for after all it is better to know that Brown cannot be suspected. I suppose you see that he was murdered?"

"Certainly."

"And by whom?"

"Probably by the ghouls. I suppose he caught them at their work and that they attacked him."

"That's the correct inference; and now, don't you see why nobody has tried to win that reward?"

"Not yet. There's nothing to show that the ghouls themselves were killed, and twenty-five thousand dollars—"

"Is a big sum of money, but it isn't worth as much to any man as his own life is."

Fielding's look showed that he did not yet grasp the detective's reasoning.

"Why!" said Nick, "suppose the ghouls saw that offer of reward, as I have no doubt they did. Suppose they wanted to restore the body to the tomb

and win the money. To do that they would have to bargain with Hawley, or somebody representing him. The body would have to be given to somebody, and the money would have to be placed in their hands."

"Sure! and Hawley was willing to do all that secretly. It was to be a case of 'no questions asked,' you know."

"Of course; but don't you see that the murder of Brown adds a crime to the case? The ghouls would run the risk of being arrested for murder."

"That's so!"

"The offer of a reward for returning the body is no guarantee that the police would not chase them up for the murder of Brown. And the man who returned the body would practically confess by that act that he had a hand in the murder of the watchman."

"You're right, Nick," said Fielding, gloomily. "The scoundrels have not dared try for the reward."

"Of course they haven't. And, though it isn't of any importance, I've got to take back that statement I made in Worcester. I am no longer so sure that the body was destroyed soon after the robbery of the tomb."

"Then what do you think?"

"I don't think anything yet, except that it's about as dark a problem as I ever fancied. I'll follow my plan and go out to Mount Auburn before calling on you. Come on, Chick."

The train had now arrived at the south station, and Fielding went to his place of business, while Nick and Chick took a car for Cambridge.

CHAPTER IV.

PROFESSOR DRUMMOND.

When the detectives arrived at the entrance to Mount Auburn they went to the superintendent's office and asked to see that official.

"We would like to know," said Nick, "where the Hawley tomb is."

The superintendent frowned.

"Well," said he, "you go into the cemetery—there's no law against that, though I wish there was—and you walk around till you see where nine-tenths of the people are going. Follow them until you come to a row of guards, who won't let you go any further. Then you'll know that you're near the Hawley tomb and that you can't get any nearer."

"Thank you," responded Nick, as pleasantly as if the superintendent had offered to go with them; "I suppose you have been overrun with curiosity-seekers since the robbery of that tomb?"

"I should say so! The public has turned the cemetery into a show ground. But that doesn't matter much, for the watchman can generally keep the ordinary public from the grass and flower beds. It's the infernal amateur detectives who are the nuisance. Hawley's big reward has set thousands of men to thinking that they can solve the problem: Why! for the first two or three days after the robbery we had to have a large police force present to keep the detectives in order."

"A detective is a troublesome sort of fellow, for a fact," remarked Nick.

"Especially the amateur," added the superintendent.

"Of course. And are they still at it?"

"I guess they are, unless they have thought themselves crazy. But we won't be bothered with them any more. Mr. Hawley himself has seen to that."

"How?"

"Well, at first he wanted everybody who had an idea to be allowed to go to the tomb and investigate. Of course, we were as anxious as he to get at the truth, and we offered no objections. But when the detectives became an army and trampled on the graves and flower beds and broke down the shrubbery, we had to draw the line. And Mr. Hawley got disgusted at having so many strangers near his family tomb. So he asked us to rope it in and keep everybody out. And this has been done."

"Thank you again," said Nick. "But, in spite of what you say, we would like to visit the place for a few minutes. I think I can convince you that we are not amateur detectives."

With this, Nick handed his card to the superintendent.

"Well!" exclaimed the latter, "this looks like business! I wish you had come ten days ago."

"It may not be too late."

"I hope not. I'll go with you, gentlemen. The cemetery is yours."

"I hardly think we want all that," said Nick, "but there is one thing we do want very much."

"What is it, Mr. Carter?"

"Secrecy. Don't let anybody know that we have been here."

"I understand. Not a word shall be said about it. Will you come right along?"

"If you please."

The superintendent led them to the tomb.

There was no crowd hanging around. It was getting too late in the day, and it was too long since the robbery for the place to be attractive to curiosity seekers.

Besides, the fact that strangers were no longer allowed to go near the tomb had become well known, and people therefore stayed away.

Nick remarked on the facts.

"Yes," admitted the superintendent; "I confess that I overstated the facts. You see, I didn't know who you were. But it is a fact that until within a day or two we have been bothered by crowds. Do you want me to stay to answer any questions?"

"No, thank you. We shall look around, and probably go away in five minutes."

The superintendent notified the guards that these gentlemen were to be allowed to go where they pleased, and left them.

Nick glanced at the tomb.

"The lock has been repaired, of course," said he, and looked down the slope.

"Brown was found in the river," he went on, thinking aloud. "The river is just at the bottom of the hill, and the river would be the easiest way for the ghouls to make off with their plunder. For, not only is the river safer to travel on than the road, but it's up hill to the road, and down hill to the river. What do you think, Chick?"

"You're thinking my thoughts," replied the young man; "but I don't believe much good will come of an investigation here. It's too long since the deed."

"True, but it's better to look the place over. If they went to the river with the body, what course would they take?"

"The shortest."

"Naturally. Let's follow it, then."

They went slowly down the hill, keeping to the pathways, and came at length to a broad path running alongside the fence, and a rod or two from it.

"Iron fence," remarked Nick; "and no sign of a gate."

He stepped up to the fence and went to yanking at one post after another.

Presently one of them gave.

He pulled it toward him, and silently called Chick's attention to it.

Then he pulled the post next to it in the same way.

That one gave also.

"They didn't lift the coffin over the fence," was all he said, and he replaced the posts as he had found them.

The detectives looked across the river and up and down it.

"Ten days after the event," said Nick, "and, meantime, I believe there has been plenty of rain. We've seen all we can see here."

Chick agreed with him, and they went back to Boston.

Only once did Nick say anything while on the way.

"Brown was murdered by a blunt instrument. That looks as if professional crooks were employed on the job."

The detectives had dinner at the Parker House, where they read all the evening papers.

No account of the finding of Brown's body gave them any more information of importance than they already possessed.

"I'll go out to Malden alone," said Nick, when they had finished. "There's no reason, though, why you should be idle. It may be that the police have information that they are keeping from the papers. Better go up to headquarters and see Haley, or some other of our friends there, and make them give up."

"I had thought of that," responded Chick.

Nick then gave him some further instructions, and went to Malden.

In twenty minutes he was on the street where Fielding lived.

But he did not call on his friend.

When he had come to Fielding's house he passed it.

"Jim lives on one side," he said to himself, "and Professor Drummond on the other. Then, that must be Drummond's house."

It was a large house, standing some distance back from the street.

Behind the house, and almost joining it, was a large stable.

So much, and the fact that there was a good deal of vacant land around the house and stable, could be seen in the half-darkness of evening.

"The professor seems to be well fixed," thought Nick.

He passed the gate to the driveway, which was closed, and came to a gate in the stone wall which led to the footpath.

The wall along the front of the grounds was rather high.

Nick placed his hand on the knob of the gate and turned it, but the gate would not open.

"Hello!" he mused, with a glance at the house; "this seems rather unneighborly."

There were lights at some of the windows in the house.

Nick looked along the wall for another gate, but saw none.

While he was wondering about it, and also looking for a bell handle, for he thought there might be one near the gate, he heard a click, and the gate swung inward.

"Evidently," thought the detective, as he passed through, "I rang a bell or something when I turned the handle. Professor Drummond seems to be up to date."

He went up the walk to the front door, and had no need to ring there, for a white-haired, white-bearded man stood in the doorway waiting for him.

He looked at Nick sharply, and the detective asked:

"Is Professor Drummond at home?"

"My name is Drummond," replied the old man. "What do you want?"

"A good many things," replied Nick, smiling. "I understand that you want to see me. My name is Nicholas Carter."

"Oh!"

The professor spoke as if that explained everything.

"Come in," he added, standing aside. "My servant is deaf as a post, and so I have to answer the bell when anybody calls. Didn't Fielding come with you?"

"No."

"He said he was going to bring you."

"I took the liberty of coming alone."

"Then you haven't seen Fielding?"

"Not since we came to Boston together from Worcester."

"I think he wants to see you."

"I will go from here to his house."

"Ah!"

The professor seemed to be satisfied.

They had been standing in the hall of the house, and now the professor opened a door to a library.

"Walk in," he said, shortly.

Nick walked in, and sat down.

"I suppose," he said, "that you've read about the finding of the watchman's body."

"No," replied the professor. "I never read the newspapers. What is ordinary news to a man like me?"

"But this is hardly ordinary news."

"True, and such news I learn without bothering to read the papers. Fielding told me about it."

"Well, I suppose it changes your views as to the sad case that you and Fielding want me to take hold of."

"Not at all. I never believed that Brown had anything to do with the matter."

CHAPTER V.

THE PROFESSOR'S THEORY.

Professor Drummond was standing with his hands clasped behind him and facing Nick.

The detective wished he would sit down.

He also wished that the professor would state his own ideas of the case.

Drummond stood, and said nothing, so Nick asked him directly what he thought of it.

"Humph!" replied the professor, "I haven't any thoughts about it. I hoped that you had."

"Perhaps I have. As Fielding said you wanted to see me I supposed you had something to say."

"Not at all. Of course, I wanted to see the man who is so famous as discoverer of secrets, and I expected to see him put his hand right on the nub of the mystery at once."

There was almost a sneer in the old man's tone.

"You expected nothing of the kind, professor," responded Nick, quietly and coldly.

The professor frowned, and his eyes glowed brightly.

"You are blunt," said he.

"Because you compel me to be so. If you want to talk over this matter and help me get at the mystery I shall be glad to stay a few minutes. Otherwise, I will not waste my time or yours."

Nick stood up.

Professor Drummond's manner changed at once. "Sit down," he said, hastily. "Of course I want to help you. But I don't know what I can tell you. What do you want to know?"

He not only motioned Nick to his chair, but sat down himself, and leaned his head upon his hand, placing his elbow against the library table.

"Well," said Nick, "I didn't ask Fielding much about the Hawley family. You might tell me."

"I'm sure Hawley has no enemies," began Drummond.

"I went over that with Fielding," interrupted Nick. "I mean now simply the family itself. Who are in it? how many servants, and that sort of thing?"

"Oh! anybody could tell you that. There's Hawley himself and his wife, and their daughter, Lucy."

"How old is she?"

"Eighteen."

"Have there been other children?"

"One, a boy."

"When did he die?"

"Twelve years ago."

"What was the matter with him?"

"A railroad accident. Killed instantly."

"Have there been other deaths in the family?"

"No. It's a queer line of questions you ask, Mr. Detective."

"Maybe," responded Nick, carelessly.

"One would think you had given a good deal of attention to the mystery of life. Have you?"

The old man's eyes glowed wonderfully.

He seemed to be eager for the detective's answer.

"Certainly," replied Nick. "It is one of my favorite studies."

"And then you, too, are a student?"

"Yes. My time is about evenly divided between my profession and study."

"And along what lines do you study, Mr. Carter?"

"The same that you have just suggested. Life and death."

"You make a mistake there!" exclaimed the old man sitting up and clasping his hands, nervously. "Life is something to be studied, for we can understand it. But death! is it not perhaps another form of life?"

"I have often thought so."

"Good! I am glad you called, Mr. Carter. I had

no idea that a detective cared for any of the higher problems."

The professor's lips were parted as if he meant to say more. Then he leaned again on the table, and added:

"But I forget myself. You are here on business. You mustn't let me take you time from it."

"You are quite right, professor," responded the detective. "I must keep my mind on the Hawley case, but sometime I should like to discuss these other matters with you."

"Yes! yes!" said the professor, impatiently; "what else do you want to know?"

"Does anybody else live with the Hawleys except their servants?"

"Nobody."

"How many servants are there?"

"Six."

"Can you name them and tell what they do?"

"Yes," and the professor did so.

"Were the servants fond of young George?" asked Nick.

"Oh, yes; he was generally liked."

"Sometimes it happens that a boy in a rich family is especially fond of some one servant. Was this the case here?"

"It was."

Again the professor's eyes began to glow wonderfully.

That seemed to be a sign that his interest was greatly aroused.

"Who was the favorite servant?" asked Nick.

"The coachman. His name is Wilson, and he was wonderfully fond of the boy. He has been a changed man since the death."

"Indeed! and since the robbery of the body? how has he been since then?"

The professor sat up.

"Very much changed!" he exclaimed, speaking rapidly. "You can't get a word out of him. He used to talk all the time. Now he never says anything. I see what you are driving at, Mr. Detective! It is a wonderful idea! I am surprised that it had not occurred to me before."

"Well," said Nick, cautiously; "the plainest things are sometimes the slowest in coming to the mind."

"Quite true! and it's the case now. Really, I seem to see an explanation of everything. Wilson, made crazy by the death of the boy he loved. Can't bear

the thought of his being laid away. Goes to the tomb and brings away the body and hides it, so as to have it near him. Wonderful thought, Mr. Detective! You are remarkably shrewd and far-seeing."

"Thank you," said Nick, without saying that the idea was wholly the professor's.

"There was a case like it in France," continued Drummond, as rapidly as before. "You must have read about it. A man's wife died and was buried. He couldn't endure the thought that she was away from him. He robbed the grave, and took the coffin to his house, where he kept it for weeks, while the detectives were trying to find the robbers. Similar case; isn't it? You remember all about it, of course?"

"Yes," said Nick, truthfully; "I read of that case."

"Then you'll watch Wilson! Oh! I am very glad that Fielding telegraphed for you, but I had no idea you were so clever."

"I shall keep my eyes open."

"That's right."

The professor drew a long breath, and again leaned his head on his hand.

"Perhaps there is some other question," he said.

"Yes, one more. What did the boy die of?"

For a moment the professor did not answer.

He stared steadily at Nick, and his eyes were very dull.

At last he said:

"You'd better ask the family physician about that."

"I will, but I thought you might know."

"I am not the family physician."

"You used to be, didn't you?"

"Years ago, yes."

"I suppose your studies interested you more than practice."

"Yes—that and my lectures."

"Well, what does the family physician say? You must know, and while I shall talk with him I'd like to know in advance what to ask him."

"The cause of death," answered the professor, slowly, "was set down as heart failure."

"Indeed! and the boy was only fifteen years old?"

"That's right."

"Do you believe that to be the cause?"

"I did not attend the boy."

"That is hardly answering my question."

"I know that, Mr. Detective. I don't want to be drawn into any dispute on that matter."

"Oh! then the cause of death is another mystery, eh?"

"You may call it so, if you like. With my ideas as to the secrets of life—but we agreed that we wouldn't talk of that at present."

Professor Drummond had half-started up with glowing eyes, but he sank back again and looked as dull as before.

"Very well," said Nick, "I'll call again when we can have time to talk about the scientific problem."

"I shall be glad to see you."

"Meantime will you tell me the name of the family physician?"

"Metcalfe. Fielding can show you where he lives."

"That is all, then, for the present."

Nick arose, and the professor did likewise.

"Are you going to call on Fielding?" asked Drummond.

"Yes; I shall go there from here."

"But you won't call at Hawley's?"

"Not yet. Fielding says that he doesn't know of my being at work on the case."

"No. It would do no good to distress him by making him talk about it. He can give you no information. But some time before long you'll look up Wilson, I suppose."

"It won't be necessary to call at Hawley's for that purpose," replied Nick.

"I presume not," said the professor. "Anyhow, you know best. You are a wonderful man, Mr. Carter. I am very glad that I have met you. Good-evening."

He had opened the front door.

Nick said "Good-evening," and went away.

"I wonder," he reflected, as he walked down to the gate, "how much of that strange old man's tone was sneering and how much was flattery? I'm afraid I don't take as much stock in the professor as Jim does."

The gate swung open before Nick could lay his hand on the knob.

"What a place!" he thought. "The gate worked by electricity from the house. I'd bet that there are curious things to be found in that house. Some time or other I'd like to have an excuse to explore it."

So thinking, he went on to his friend's house.

CHAPTER VI.

UNEXPECTED PERIL.

"Ah!" said Fielding, when Nick entered the room where he was sitting, "you are so late I began to think you had found a clew."

"You must think I'm a lucky man, Jim."

"I do. Haven't you said yourself that your success has depended a great deal on good luck?"

"Yes, that's true."

"When you say it, Nick; the rest of us know that you succeed because of ability."

The detective smiled.

"Well," added Fielding, "I suppose you want to go right over to Drummond's. I'm ready——"

"I've been there."

"What!"

"I called on the professor before coming here."

"But you didn't see him."

"I certainly did, or a man who passed himself off as the professor. A very old man with white hair and beard——"

"That was Drummond, of course. But how did you get in?"

"Through the gate and up the footpath to the front door."

"Was the gate open?"

"It was opened just after I tried it."

"Well, of all that's wonderful!"

"Why, what is there wonderful about calling at a man's house in the edge of the evening?"

"Drummond never on any account lets a stranger in. No one can call on him without letting him know in advance. Even his neighbors have to ring up on the telephone and tell him they're coming. If they don't they can bang away at the gate all night, for all he cares."

"Indeed! he must be a singular man."

"Very! But I suppose you found that out in your talk with him."

"I found him interesting."

"I was hoping to be there with you, but, of course, it's all right. Ah! I see now why he let you in."

"Why was it?"

"I had told him that I should bring you over sometime this evening. He must have been waiting for us."

"Like enough."

They sat down, and Fielding passed a box of cigars.

"You haven't found anything, I suppose?" he said.

"Oh, yes—something. I think I have made a little progress."

"I'm mighty glad to hear that."

Nick looked keenly at his friend.

There was something in his tone that surprised him.

"Jim," he said, "what's the matter? I hope you are not getting sick over this Hawley matter."

"No, Nick; but it does seem maddening."

"I can understand your friendly interest in it, but why should you give it so much thought?"

"I can't help it, living right next door and knowing all that goes on there. If Hawley doesn't tell me, his servants tell my servants, and so I am aware of everything."

"Then you must have a lot of information."

Fielding hesitated.

"No," he said—"nothing that bears on your problem."

"Come!" said Nick, with good-natured sharpness, "speak up, old man! What do you mean by keeping anything back from me?"

"Nothing, except that I don't want to bother you with things that have nothing to do with your work. Besides——"

"There isn't any besides, Jim! I'll judge whether it bears on my problem or not. You've heard something new. What is it?"

"Well, if you must have it, there's more trouble over there."

He jerked his head in the direction of the Hawley house.

"Death or illness?" asked Nick, quickly.

"Neither. It's a case of dis—— Pshaw! what am I saying? Servants' gossip——"

"Out with it."

"It's just this, Nick, and I'm trying not to pay any attention to it. You'll laugh at me for telling you. I got it from the servants. Lucy Hawley, the daughter, hasn't come home to dinner. Now, that's a mighty serious thing, isn't it?"

Fielding laughed in a forced way.

Then he glanced at the detective and started.

"By Jove, Nick!" he cried, "I believe you've turned pale! Is it possible that you perceive something ominous in this?"

For an instant the detective smoked in silence.

When he did speak, his voice was perfectly steady, but low.

"Where had the girl been?" he asked.

"To school."

"As usual?"

"Certainly."

"Tell me every detail."

"I don't know any. Merely what my servants—"

"Tell what they say."

"It seems that Lucy usually gets home at five. She did not appear at that hour to-day, but nothing was thought of it—in fact, I don't think her absence was noticed until dinner time."

"When was that?"

"Six o'clock."

"Go on."

"A servant went to her room. Evidently she had not been there. The house was searched. She was not found. Her hat and school things were not where they would have been if she had returned as usual."

"Well?"

"Under the circumstances Mr. and Mrs. Hawley were much disturbed. Their nerves are on edge, you know. One of his servants asked him if I should be notified.

"No," said Hawley; "we mustn't make trouble for our neighbors if we can help it. Lucy will doubtless come in soon."

"So no word was brought to me directly, but his coachman spoke to mine, and so I was informed."

"When was that?"

"I heard of it about an hour ago."

"It is now nearly nine. Have you heard since?"

"Yes, indeed. I have made my servants spy on Hawley's house. If he doesn't want me to be informed, I don't want to walk in and tell him I know all about it, but I do want to know the facts almost as badly as he does."

"How long since you have heard anything?"

"I got word just before you came in."

"And that was—"

"Nothing had been seen or heard of Lucy."

Nick was about to speak, when a door opened, and the butler came in.

He hesitated at sight of Nick, but Fielding said: "Say, John, what is the news?"

"There is none, sir," replied the butler. "Miss Lucy has not returned."

"What about the inquiry they made at the school-house? Have they heard from that yet?"

"Yes, sir. The teachers and scholars all say that Miss Lucy started home as usual, sir."

"Where was she last seen?"

"As near as can be found out, about half-a-mile from home."

"Was she alone at that time?" asked Nick.

"Yes, sir."

"And going toward home?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has Hawley notified the police?" asked Fielding.

"I believe that he is doing so now, sir, by telephone."

"I will explain," said Fielding to Nick, "that as soon as it was found that Lucy was missing, servants were sent to all her girlfriends and to the neighbors along the street. That resulted in no clew whatever. And yet it did not seem a matter to be taken seriously."

The detective was silent.

"You may go, John," said Fielding, "but keep up the watch, and let me know all that you hear."

"Now, Nick," he added, when the butler had gone, "is it possible that you regard this as important?"

"I am afraid it is terribly important, Jim?"

"You don't mean it!"

"I certainly do. You said I looked pale a moment ago. I presume I did. I felt so. This case has interested me more than you can think. I sympathize deeply with this Mr. Hawley, whom I have never seen. It would be awful if the horrible power that has worked one death in his family should be allowed to work another before means can be taken to stop the crime!"

"Nick!" gasped Fielding. "What's that you say? A power has worked one death? Do you mean to say that young George was murdered?"

"I mean to say nothing more just yet," replied Nick, with a wave of his hand. "I must think a bit, and ask questions."

"I wonder if I ought not to take you right over to see Mr. Hawley?"

"Not yet. I don't want to see him until I have finished my work—not then, unless I succeed."

Fielding was horrified at the detective's suggestion.

words. Was the case, then, even darker than he had supposed?"

"Jim," said Nick, after a moment, "does Drummond know of this?"

"Of Lucy's absence? Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Because I told him."

"When?"

"At the time I told him I was going to bring you to call. Didn't he mention it?"

"No."

"I suppose he didn't regard it as important."

"He seemed to hint at it," said Nick, "for he told me he thought you wanted to see me."

"That was it, I suppose, for I told him the matter made me anxious."

"What did he say?"

"You're getting to be as nervous as Hawley," he said, and he spoke of giving me a tonic."

"What was the matter with George Hawley?"

Nick asked the question abruptly, and Fielding was surprised.

"I don't know the scientific name for it," he answered, "but, in plain words, I believe it was heart disease."

"Does it run in the family?"

"Not that I know of."

"Had George shown any signs before his last illness that his heart was weak?"

"I had never heard of it."

"Where does Dr. Metcalfe live?"

"A few houses down the street—number 173."

"I'll go and see him."

"Let me ring up his house and see if he is at home."

Fielding went to the telephone, and returned in a moment to say that Dr. Metcalfe had gone to the city for the evening.

"It doesn't matter much," said Nick. "I must be moving. There is a great deal to do in a hurry."

"Won't you give me a hint, old man?"

"Not now, Jim. To-morrow, perhaps. Good-night."

As he went down to the street, the detective's mind was filled with thoughts of Professor Drummond.

"Am I too late?" he kept asking himself, "or am I mistaken?"

He did not start for Boston at once, but went

along the street past Mr. Hawley's until he came to the professor's place.

Then he stepped across the street and stood under some bushes that lined the sidewalk, and looked across the house and grounds.

He had not tried to hide himself. Nick was simply thinking, but he noticed when a man passed him that he was not seen, for the man went on without turning his head.

Then he noticed that he had happened to choose a place that was in deep shadow.

An arc light threw strong rays on the gate to the professor's driveway just opposite, and lit up much of the grounds, but the spot where Nick stood was heavily shaded by a tree and the bushes.

At last Nick shook his head and was about to go on, when footsteps approaching hurriedly made him hesitate.

They were on the other side of the street.

A man was walking rapidly.

He passed under the arc light, and Nick recognized him.

It was a man named Richard Taylor—a gambler, swindler, would-be murderer, and perhaps a good many other things as bad.

Taylor was the partner of Guy Preble, now locked up in Worcester and awaiting trial.

When Preble was arrested, Taylor could not be found. The two had apparently parted company before Nick began his operations in Worcester.

And here he was within reach!

Nick was on the point of dashing across the street to arrest him, but something made him pause.

It was the fact that Taylor took a key from his pocket and applied it to the professor's gate.

He opened it, the one that led to the driveway, went in and closed it carefully behind him.

Then he hurried toward the house.

Nick could see that he did not go in by the front door.

"Well," thought the detective, "to-morrow will do just as well, and maybe a great deal better. I know where to find you, Dick Taylor, and I have some new thoughts now about Professor Drummond."

He started now for the city.

A little way after he had passed Fielding's house again, he came to an automobile.

It had been stopped apparently because something

was wrong with it, for a man was under it at work, while another held a light for him.

Nick passed on.

He had hardly seen the machine, but he remembered that such a thing had been in view when a minute or so later he heard the sounds of chuffing and the whirr of wheels behind him.

"They got it fixed, all right," he said to himself.

Just then the machine passed him at a high rate of speed.

It had hardly come into view, when something fell over his head, knocking his hat off as it did so.

Then there was a terrible yank, and the detective was thrown flat upon his face.

Without pause he began to slide rapidly over the hard roadway.

CHAPTER VII.

STILL IN THE RING.

Nick had been lassoed from the automobile.

The machine had been run close to the curb, and the noose was dropped over his head with little more trouble than reaching out an arm.

If he had been thrown upon his back, there is no doubt that that would have been the end of Nick Carter, for the noose would have caught under his chin, and when it tightened his neck would have been broken.

His falling upon his face saved his life for at least the moment.

The noose caught just hard enough to hold, but it did not choke the detective.

This was avoided partly by the quickness with which he put up his hands and caught the rope.

He laid hold of it beyond the slip knot and held on like death, well knowing that to let go would cause the noose to tighten and so strangle him.

But in that situation his peril was only begun.

He was scraping over the hard ground and banging against small stones.

The scoundrels in the auto were running it as close to the curb as they dared, undoubtedly with the idea that their victim's head would be knocked against the curb-stone and crushed.

There was a street crossing just ahead.

Stone flagging was laid across the road at that point, and near the sidewalk the gutter ran under a slab.

The villains steered almost straight for that.

If Nick had been on his back his head would have come against the slab over the gutter and death would have been instant.

The twitching of the rope showed that the man holding it was trying to turn his victim over.

Nick could not see the raised slab, but he was keeping his head up as well as he could, anyway, and when he heard the auto jolt as the wheels came against the slab, he sprang upward as well as he could from his elbows and toes.

Probably he did not rise more than an inch or two, but it was just enough to bring his head clear of the stone.

He gritted his teeth as his knees banged painfully against it.

"If I could only get a purchase with my feet," he thought, "I'd yank that devil out of the machine."

That was impossible, for the machine was going too fast to give him the chance to pull back.

There was nothing to do, then, but hang onto the rope to prevent it from strangling him, and hope for an accident or something to interrupt the villains.

There was little chance of an interruption before the detective would be bruised beyond recovery, for the street was very quiet and little used in the evening.

Suddenly, a light appeared far ahead.

A carriage was approaching.

Nick, with his eyes half-full of dust, saw it.

"Now they'll have to let go," he thought.

The villains saw the light, too, but they were not going to let go as long as they were sure that their victim had not been killed.

There was a turn to the right just below into a road that led off into the State park.

Nick did not know that the men meant to make that turn, and thus avoid meeting the carriage, until he saw and felt the machine whizzing around the corner.

He was slewed far to the other side of the road.

"It's all up with me now," he thought desperately, "unless I manage to do something."

The machine made the curve so fast that it went around on two wheels.

Nick was almost lifted from the ground and slewed to the other side of the new road, where, instead of a curbstone there was a grassy bank at the edge of the sidewalk.

As he struck this sideways, he doubled up his legs and then, pushing them against the grassy bank, sprang out from it with all his strength.

It was enough to throw him forward a bit, and so get a slack in the rope.

Next instant the slack was taken up by the progress of the machine.

At the same instant the detective pulled back for all he was worth.

The sudden loosening of the rope and its quick tightening again were enough to unbalance the man, and Nick's hard yank pulled him completely out of the auto.

The strain on the detective's arms ceased at once; but he slid over the ground several feet before he rolled into the gutter and stopped.

Numb and almost unconscious he twisted the noose from his head and tried to get up.

He fell down again, and, for a moment, had to stay there on his hands and knees, getting his breath.

His limbs were quivering and blood was flowing freely from his hands and face.

Of course, his clothes were torn in a dozen places, and he seemed to be one mass of bruises and dirt.

He was hardly aware of it, but he heard the auto come to a stop.

Then there was a sound of a man running toward him.

He seemed to come part way, turn and run back.

Nick could not tell, for he had not the strength to raise his head.

But this was in the first few seconds.

Soon he pulled himself together, and, with a painful effort, dragged himself to the edge of the sidewalk and sat down.

The knotted rope was still in his hand.

He heard wheels at his left, and, looking in that direction, saw a carriage pass along the road on which he had been at first.

"I'm sure I haven't been wholly unconscious," he thought, "so that must be the carriage whose light I saw as I was being dragged over the ground, but it seems an hour ago since I saw it. I suppose that it is less than half-a-minute."

He looked in the other direction, but saw nothing.

There were few lights on that road.
Nick felt for his revolver.

Drawing it, he crawled, for he could not walk, in the direction taken by the auto.

He had not gone more than thirty feet when he came upon the body of a man.

The detective placed his hand on the man's heart, and then pocketed his revolver.

"Dead!" he muttered.

He had to sit down again.

In all his adventures, he could not remember when he had been so shaken up and exhausted.

After a moment he took out his pocket lantern.

Nick wanted a sight of that man's face.

"I'd like to see the fellow who so nearly did for me," he thought.

He had to give that up. The ingenious little lamp had been so badly damaged that it wouldn't work.

"Well," said Nick, "hang me if you aren't worse off than I am. I can see, if I can't do anything else."

Up to this time he had not been able to think very clearly.

Now, his senses seemed to come back suddenly. He felt more pain, but he also felt that something must be done at once.

"Of course," he reasoned, "this attempt to kill me is connected with the Hawley mystery, which is no longer much of a mystery to me."

"But there is a great deal, the hardest part of it, in fact, to be done before I can face the father of that boy and girl."

"This fellow here can tell nothing, but his face may, and there may be things in his pockets that will serve as clews."

"His confederate got away in the auto and is now whirling through the park."

"But he, or some other confederate, may come back here to take away this body."

"I must first prevent that."

He got to his feet and leaned against a shade tree for a moment, wondering whether he would be able to walk.

After a moment he took hold of the fence that ran beside the walk, and, clinging to it, made his way slowly over the short distance to the corner.

There was one house on that corner.

Nick was about to call there and ask for somebody to stand guard over the dead man when he heard the sounds of horse's hoofs.

A man on horseback was coming up the street.

Nick waited until he was near.

"Officer!" he said, then.

It was a mounted policeman.

"What's up?" asked the latter, reining his horse to the curb.

"There's——" began Nick, when the policeman interrupted:

"Great guns! have you been dragged through a packing machine?"

"About as bad as that," replied Nick, "but there's some of me left. I was going to say that there's a dead man up the road a little way."

"A dead man!"

"He tried to murder me, but he got caught in his own trap!"

Nick held up the rope that he had dragged after him.

The officer exclaimed in astonishment and got down from his horse.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Never mind that now," said Nick, faintly. "I'll tell all about it at the station. I suppose you'll take me there?"

"You bet! but you can't walk."

"Not very far."

The policeman stepped to a tree on which there was a police signal box.

He rang the signal for the patrol wagon.

"You can't get very far away," he remarked, then, "and I'll take the risk of leaving you while I run up and find your dead man; understand?"

"It's not more than three or four rods," responded Nick, "on this side."

"Take the risk of leaving me!" he said to himself, and smiled. "But he's right. He would have no business to take my word for what's happened."

The officer came back in a moment, and began to ask questions.

"Let me tell your captain about it," said Nick, who had sat down. "I can say this: that it won't be good business to leave that body unguarded."

"I don't mean to," replied the officer.

In a few minutes the patrol wagon came, and Nick was taken to the station, a policeman being left to guard the body.

A surgeon who was called to look Nick over wanted him to go to a hospital, but Nick refused.

He was growing steadily better, and his mind was on his case.

The captain was sent for, and Nick told him privately who he was, but he did not say what business brought him to Malden.

"If any inquiries are made about this matter," said Nick, "give it out that I'm badly damaged; killed, if you like. Somebody may ask questions. I want it understood that I'm no good."

"Well! you look it!" exclaimed the captain.

"Doubtless. Now, will you let me stay here——"

"Certainly! as long as you like."

"Then tell the doctor to patch me up, and I'll ask one other favor of you."

"What is it?"

"Call up the Parker House on the 'phone, and ask if my assistant, Chickering Carter, is there. If he is, tell him I want him here in a hurry. If he isn't there, leave word with the clerk to notify him."

"I'll do that at once."

It proved that Chick was in the hotel, and he went flying to Malden, arriving at the station just as the surgeon was finishing what Nick called his "patch-work."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Chick, as he went into the captain's room, where Nick lay in bed; "somebody hasn't done a thing to you, eh? What——"

"Don't talk about me yet," interrupted Nick, and then, to the captain, "you'll excuse us a few minutes?"

"Certainly," said the captain, and he went out.

"Your report, Chick," said Nick, closing his eyes.

"Well," responded Chick; "I got nothing from the police that is of any value. The fellows at headquarters are all up a tree. But I looked up that Professor Drummond, and I learned a good deal about him that's interesting, if not important."

"Spiel away, Chick."

"He used to be a professor in a medical school, as your friend said, and he was obliged to resign."

"What for?"

"Because he got to be a crank on a curious subject. He couldn't lecture on anything without turning off to the mystery of life, as he called it."

"He sprang the same thing on me this evening."

"Is that what bunged you up so?"

Nick smiled.

"Indirectly," he answered. "The professor hired this work done, but he talked mystery of life to me, and I led him on a little. Go ahead about the medical school."

"It isn't a long story. The president and other officers simply got tired of his everlasting yawp, and asked him to resign. He resisted a good deal, and promised to stick to his regular subjects. So they let him stay awhile, but it was no go. His mind was bent that way, and he couldn't keep from his pet theory.

"The students kicked, and made fun of him. So at last he had to go.

"It is said that he is a man of very great learning, and he is highly respected, even by those who turned him down."

"That's enough," said Nick. "Now listen."

He told his assistant what had happened, and mentioned the professor's theory of the case.

Chick smiled.

"He tried to make me think that I had invented that theory," said Nick. "It might be worth thinking of if it wasn't for these other things. Now, the first thing to do is to find who the men in the automobile were."

"Men employed by Drummond," said Chick.

"Yes, but who? Was it his machine? Of course he made the plan, and had the machine in waiting until I should come along. Have they brought in the dead man?"

"I'll see."

Chick went out, and, after a few minutes, returned, and said that he had seen the dead man.

"I don't know him," he reported, "and neither do the police. There isn't a scrap of anything in his pockets by which he can be identified."

"Well?" said Nick. "Well, he must be traced. Our only lead is the rope. I hung on to that, and the captain has it somewhere. It's new. As this plan was made in a hurry, the rope was probably bought in some shop in Mullen this evening. You'd better take it with you and go to the stores."

"All right. It's pretty near closing time, and I'd better get at it quickly."

"Wait!" said Nick, as his assistant was about to go. "I have a better plan."

"Well?"

Nick spoke rapidly for two or three minutes, and Chick listened in astonishment.

"You won't be equal to it," he said.

"If I can't?" the great detective answered, shortly. "I can't. Telegraph for him."

Accordingly Chick hurried out, and sent this telegram to Patsy:

Take midnight train, and report at Mullen police station on arrival.

Then he went out and spent the rest of the night in front of Professor Drummond's house.

"I'm badly shaken up," said Nick, as he bade him good-night, "but I'm still in the ring."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECRET OF LIFE.

Early the next morning there was a strange scene in Professor Drummond's house.

It was in a room at the back on the second floor, a large room, with shelves along the walls.

On the shelves were a great number of jars and bottles of odd shapes such as chemists use.

Some were filled with liquids, others with powders.

There was a large sink, with water faucets and tubes for gas.

In the middle of the room was a long table, or bench, slightly higher at one end than at the other.

This had no cover.

Shortly after sunrise the professor came into this room.

For a long time, more than an hour, he worked with his glass pipes, powders and liquids.

When he had finished he held a retort half full of a brownish liquid.

He held it up to the light.

"The solvent!" he muttered, excitedly; "the final triumph after a long life of study and experiment. It will reveal the secret of life! and the time is at hand when the greatest will be mine. How I shall laugh at those who have mocked me!"

He poured the liquid from the retort into a flask and corked it firmly.

Then he placed the flask on a shelf, within easy reach of the table, and took up another flask that also had liquid in it.

He held that up to the light, and chuckled, grimly.

"My safety valve!" he said. "If I should fail, or if I should be interrupted, this will end all trouble for me. It will kill me; yes, but my secrets will perish with me. What do I care for existence, if I cannot go on with my work? I must prove my great

theory or die, and, if I am thwarted, I would rather die.

"So I made you, my fine thing! you have more power than dynamite."

He held this flask up to the light also.

"More power than dynamite or any known explosive," he went on. "This great house would be but a mass of dust if I should let you do your work.

"Come on, then, anybody who dares to interrupt me. But there will be none. That prying detective is helpless if not dead, and there is no other who suspects me.

"I wonder if he suspected me?

"Probably not, for the old professor is shrewd. It takes more than a sharp-witted detective to get ahead of me! But it was well to be on the safe side, for Carter might blunder in upon me while I am at work.

"So I had my brave boys fix Carter. Ha! what if one of them did break his thick skull in doing so? What are detectives and ordinary men to such a master as I am?"

The professor put the second flask upon a shelf, and began to clear up the sink where he had been at work.

After a moment he stopped this and went to the door.

"I must know," he was muttering; "I don't care to take the risk of interruption."

He opened the door and called:

"Dick! Dick Taylor!"

"Yes, sir," answered a voice from another room.

"Come here, Dick. I want you."

"Yes, sir; directly."

The professor went back to the sink.

Presently the door opened, and a young man came in.

"Ah! Dick," said the professor, turning; "you have had a long night of it."

"Yes, sir," and the young man yawned.

"It takes an old man to go without sleep, Dick. I shall not have to keep you up all night again, though! Ah! you are a fortunate young man! don't you think so?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"Suppose! why, Dick, what would you have done with the detectives after you if I had not taken you in? As the old professor's assistant you are safe, and you are able to learn a great many things. You

will know sooner than anybody except me all about the secret of life. Is not that a great thing, Dick?"

"I think it is, sir."

"Huh! you don't seem to be very much interested. But never mind. You are probably more interested in the fate of the man who was your enemy. I want to know about him, too. That is why I called you. I suppose you made inquiries in the careful way I planned for you?"

"Yes, sir. I found the detective's hat in the road and took it to the police station."

"Ah! and what did you say?"

"I told them I had heard that a dead man had been found on the park road, and that I thought perhaps the hat might be a clew the police would like."

"Good! what did they say?"

"They said I did quite right, and asked me where I found the hat."

"Well?"

"I told them on the Park road."

"Good! the further away from here the better, Dick. Go on."

"By that time I could ask questions without suspicion, and I learned that the wounded man, they wouldn't say that he was Carter, the detective——"

"Yes, yes! what of him?"

"He's at the point of death."

"Ah!"

The professor rubbed his hands together in a satisfied way, and his eyes gleamed wickedly.

"They don't expect him to live the day out."

"Fine! I can finish my work without trouble. What about Jerry, Dick?"

"He hasn't returned yet, sir."

"Hum!"

The professor thought a moment.

"It doesn't matter," he said then. "Jerry knows how to take care of himself."

Professor Drummond then turned to the sink again.

"Here, Dick," he said; "put these things in the corner."

His assistant took a number of jars and retorts from the professor's hands and placed them as directed.

"Now," said the professor, "it is time for the great test. It will be a proud moment for me, Dick. I wish your father could have lived to see this day."

"I wish so, too, sir."

"And yet you weren't a very dutiful son, Dick. Never mind. I took you in because of my friendship for your father, and in these few days you have been very helpful to me."

"Now I must get to the real work. Bring in the subject, Dick."

"The boy or the girl?" asked the assistant.

"The girl, of course!" exclaimed the professor. "Of what use is the boy now?"

The assistant did not reply, but went out of the room, leaving the door open.

A minute later he returned, carrying in his arms a beautiful girl, apparently about eighteen years old.

She was motionless and apparently dead.

The professor's eyes glowed as he looked at her.

"On the operating-table, Dick," he said, hoarsely.

The assistant laid the girl upon the table, and then stood back, with an inquiring look.

The professor did not glance at him.

He was looking fixedly at the girl, and he was muttering as if thinking aloud:

"Brought here by the power of my stronger will, which men call hypnotism. Brought here for the glorious purpose of being the final test in my scientific problem. Ah! Lucy Hawley, how proud you will be in the future that you were selected by the old professor for this great purpose."

For an instant his eyes wavered, and his voice became lower and huskier.

"If I have been mistaken," he whispered; "if the solvent is not complete, she will die! she will die!"

"But, bah! the solvent is perfect. I shall succeed, and if not, what then? Try again. One human life more or less doesn't matter when it is a question of science!"

"Do you want me to help you, sir?" asked the assistant.

Professor Drummond looked up, hastily.

"No," he answered; "I had forgotten you were here. Go out, Dick. I must be alone. Watch for the return of Jerry. I will call you if I want you."

The assistant went out, and the professor stood for a brief moment looking at his subject, as he called the unfortunate girl.

Then he reached to the shelf near by and took down the flask that contained his wonderful solvent.

"The time has come!" he whispered.

At that moment the door opened again, and into the room stepped Nick Carter.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROBLEM SOLVED.

Professor Drummond started back, with a gasp of awful astonishment.

"Carter!" he stammered.

Then he quickly placed his solvent on the shelf, and caught up a scalpel with one hand and the flask of powerful explosive that he called his "safety valve," with the other.

"Yes," said the detective, sternly; "Carter, and in time, I hope, to prevent your last and foulest crime."

He aimed his revolver as he spoke.

"Dick! Dick Taylor!" called the professor.

But the assistant did not answer.

"Professor," commanded Nick, "bring that girl to her senses. You know better than I how to do it. Get to work or this thing in my hand will speak for me!"

The professor held up his flask at arms' length.

"Shoot!" he retorted, scornfully. "I will drop this flask, and the gas it contains will kill you instantly."

"Do you expect to escape it?" asked Nick.

"I? no! but what does it matter? If I live and finish my work the secret of life will be made known to the world. If you compel me to die, I shall take my secret with me to the grave, and the world will be the loser."

"Then," said Nick, "you and I may as well die together."

With that he turned his weapon slightly and fired.

The bullet went through the flask just below the professor's fingers, smashing the neck and causing the larger part of it to drop to the floor, where it broke in pieces.

Professor Drummond's astonishment paralyzed him.

"Why doesn't it explode?" he asked, faintly.

Nick paid no attention to the question.

Placing the revolver on the operating table, where he could reach it if needed, he bent over the motionless girl.

He made passes upon her forehead, and spoke to her.

"Lucy! Lucy Hawley!" he said, with intense earnestness. "Awake! I command you to awake!"

Meantime the professor staggered to the other

NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

side of the room, and went to fumbling among the bottles on the shelves there.

Noticing this with a side glance, Nick called: "Chick!"

He did not need to call, for Chick was already entering the room, or, rather, the young man who had been acting as the professor's assistant did.

"You have been fatally careless, Dick," croaked the professor, seeing him; "my work is ruined, and I die!"

Chick was leaping toward him, but he was too late.

Professor Drummond had uncorked a phial, poured some white powder upon his palm, and clapped it to his mouth.

Just as Chick came to him, he fell heavily to the floor.

"Let him go, Chick," said Nick, hurriedly. "It is simply a dangerous lunatic out of the way. We must save better lives if possible. Has Metcalfe arrived?"

"He's at the door now."

"Tell him to hurry. Ah!"

This last was in a tone of deep satisfaction.

In response to his many passes and commands, for he had spoken to the girl even while he was talking to Chick, Lucy Hawley opened her eyes.

She closed them at once, and breathed painfully.

"Take Metcalfe to George," exclaimed Nick. "I think I can manage this case."

He bent over the girl again.

"Lucy!" he said, softly; "do you hear me?"

"Yes. Where am I?" she answered, faintly.

"Near home," replied Nick, soothingly. "Do not fear, but wake up. I tell you to wake!"

She drew another long breath, and tried to rise.

"Lie still," said the detective. "You are very tired, and in a minute I shall let you go to sleep again. Can you swallow?"

He had taken a phial from his pocket, and was holding it to her lips.

Feebly she obeyed his command, and a few drops passed into her mouth.

"Good!" said the detective, kindly. "Now you may sleep, but I will take you to a more comfortable place."

He took her in his arms, and carried her to a chamber, where he placed her on a bed.

She was very quiet, and he rejoiced to see a faint color on her cheeks.

"The girl, at least, will be saved!" he said to himself, and ran downstairs to the telephone.

A moment later he had Fielding on the wire.

"Jim," he said, "come to the professor's house at once, and bring your wife. Lucy is here, and needs a woman's attention."

"Hurrah!" answered Fielding; "shall I notify Hawley?"

"Not yet. Both children are here, but I'm afraid the boy's dead. Hurry!"

Nick returned to the professor's workroom, but it was only to glance in, see the motionless form of the old man on the floor, and then close and lock the door.

He next hurried to another room, a chamber, where Chick and Dr. Metcalfe were bending over the body of a boy upon the bed.

On the floor was an empty coffin.

Dr. Metcalfe looked up as the detective entered.

"This is Mr. Carter, doctor," said Chick.

The doctor shook hands with Nick, and said:

"I am afraid it is hopeless, Mr. Carter."

"Yes," said Nick, with a glance at the body. "The boy has evidently been dead for some time."

At this moment a great racket was heard in the stable next the house.

There were loud cries, and a pistol shot.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Nick, without stopping his efforts, "I forgot all about Patsy. The boy is having a time of his own. Go out and help him, Chick."

But Chick was already out of the room.

On the way downstairs he met Fielding and his wife just coming in.

He told them where to find Lucy Hawley, and sped on to the stable.

As he left the house, he saw Patsy coming from the stable.

The young detective had a black eye, but the other was bright enough, for in front of him were two bruised toughs, with their hands caught in bracelets behind them.

They were chained together, also, and Patsy held the end of the chain.

Beside him limped another tough, who had been wounded by a pistol bullet.

"This fellow," said Patsy, indicating the wounded man, "can't run very far, but you'd better be quick."

him, Chick, if you've got a pair of bracelets about you."

Chick had such an article, and the man was promptly fastened to the other two.

"What's become of Taylor?" asked Chick.

"He got away," replied Patsy. "It couldn't be helped. You see I was on the watch for the automobile down by the gate, but the rascal rode in by a back road from the park. First thing I knew I saw the stable door open. All four of 'em were in there. They found Taylor where you had left him, and they cut his bonds. So he was free when I came up, and while I was having a tussle with these fellows, he lit out by a back door, and went off into the park."

"Well," said Chick; "he's of the least consequence, for he wasn't here when the body was stolen. These are undoubtedly the ghouls."

"No doubt of it."

They were right. One of the four ghouls had been killed in attempting to murder Nick from the automobile, which belonged, by the way, to Professor Drummond. The other three were Patsy's captives, and it may be explained that the operations of the four, as described in the first chapter of this account, were learned from the confession of one of them, who turned State's evidence.

Chick telephoned the police station for the patrol-wagon, which came soon and took the prisoners away.

How Nick had succeeded in unmasking the dangerous lunatic may be told briefly.

He had made the plan while he lay in the police station.

Chick, after telegraphing to Patsy, went up to the professor's house, and waited until near sunrise, when Dick Taylor came out.

He had been sent by the professor to make inquiries at the station about Nick.

Chick unfastened the fellow, and carried him to the stable, where he left him, bound and gagged.

Then he made himself up like Taylor, took his keys and entered the house.

He saw the professor and explained that he had not been to the station yet, because he was afraid of the men whom he had seen near the house.

Drummond told him to wait a while and try again. Meantime, the detective went into the operating-room to assist the professor.

There he heard Drummond muttering about his "safety valve."

Fielding what that meant, and also making sure that glass the explosive was contained in, Chick

watched his opportunity and when the professor left the room for a moment, he took away the flask and put in its place one just like it in appearance but containing a harmless liquid.

In that hour of helping the professor, Chick learned that not only was the body of Lucy Hawley in the house, but that of George also.

Thus Nick's suspicions were confirmed.

Patsy came through on the midnight train and arrived at the Malden station about half-past six.

Nick got up then and they went together to the Drummond house, where Chick let them in.

What followed is known, except that as soon as Nick entered the professor's operating-room Chick telephoned for Dr. Metcalfe.

Fielding and many others were greatly shocked to find that their friend, the professor, was a lunatic.

They had supposed that he was "queer," but as sane as anybody. It was perfectly clear, however, that in studying on his scientific problem he had lost his reason, and that he deliberately caused the apparent death of George Hawley (which had become real when the boy was embalmed) for the purpose of making an experiment; and, while all the facts cannot be fully known, it seems probable that when the professor found that he was unable to restore George to consciousness, he made a new "solvent" and determined to try it on the boy's sister.

Speaking of the matter, Fielding asked Nick when he first suspected Drummond.

"Well," replied the great detective, "an unpleasant feeling flashed across me at your first mention of his name. So I went to Boston, half-suspecting him, and for that reason had Chick look up his record. I was almost sure he was guilty while I was talking with him, and when I learned that Lucy had disappeared, I had no more doubt."

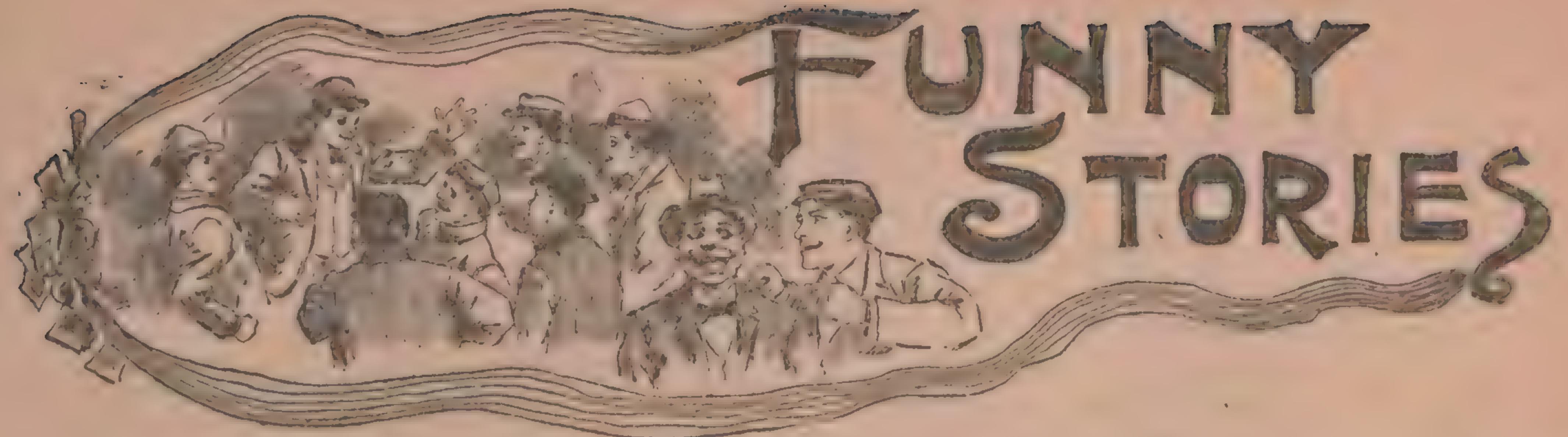
It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Hawley and his wife were rejoiced beyond expression at the result of Nick's work. They could do no less than give him the big reward offered for the recovery of the boy's body, and that sum, therefore, was Nick's fee for the case:

The detectives were sorry that things happened so that Dick Taylor escaped.

"But," said Nick, "he amounts to little. He's an unusual crook, because he can't do anything on his own account. He always has to act as the tool of an abler man."

THE END.

Next week's issue of this weekly (No. 278) will contain "Nick Carter as a Mill Hand; or, The Fall River Murder Mystery Revealed." Taylor was still at liberty. He soon turned up again, only to meet his old enemy Nick again. Quick work and plenty of it, as Nick had marked out for him. Read about it in next week's issue, boys.



Last chance, boys! This is the last week of a great contest—the greatest we've ever had. Get your funny stories in quick, or you'll be too late.

Remember, you have still a chance for one of the prizes. Just look on page 30 if you don't remember what they are. Don't let the chance get past you.

Turning to Rubber.

(By Robert Brown.)

Walking into the telephone office one day a young dude promptly tried to make a mash on a pretty girl who was standing in her place in line waiting to use one of the private telephones.

The dude took a stand over by a chair where he could look at her all the time and she could not turn any way to get away from that gaze.

After a few minutes a messenger boy came in with a telegram for one of the operators, and soon got the lay of things.

While the lady was signing the receipt book he proceeded to get up a job on the dude, and as quick as the dude went to looking at the girl again he coolly walked up and tapping the dude on the arm said, loud enough for all to hear him:

"Say, mister, I have got a bet with one of the operators here and we'd like to refer it to you, as you look just about like a man who could settle it about right."

The young guy puffed out his chest and looked wise.

"With pleasure, my young friend," he replied, affectedly. "There is hardly any subject on which I am not well informed."

"That is what I thought," bowed the messenger, with great suavity. "You look like it."

"What is your bet about?"

"It is about Lot's wife in the Bible, sir, who was turned to a pillar of salt," continued the messenger, so loud that all in the room could hear him easily. "I've bet my friend that there is as great a miracle right here in town."

"You are wrong," cried the swell guy, turning to look at the pretty girl again; "you have lost the bet. There is no greater miracle in town than a woman turning to salt."

"How about you a-turning to rubber?" demanded the messenger boy, with a grin.

It took about a second for the young swell to tumble, but a chorus of laughter from all in the room quickly enlightened him to the point of the joke.

He grew red around the collar, glared fiercely at the messenger boy for a moment, then jammed his hat down on his empty head and made for the door.

"Say, young man, I'd open a bottle of wine for you if they kept it here on sale, but here is a quarter for you, anyway," and the pretty girl flipped him the piece of silver. He caught it, laughed, put it in his pocket, and bounded downstairs after the dude.

Greatly Stirred Up.

(By Grover E. Bruninghaus, N. J.)

While visiting my homestead I asked a farmer if there was anything new in the neighborhood.

"Yes," answered the farmer, "the whole neighborhood is stirred up."

"Pray tell me the cause," I asked.

"Ploughing," quickly answered the farmer.

Smoking Aloud.

(By Harry Smith, Neb.)

The captain of a ship seeing an Irishman smoking away abaft by the wheelhouse, stepped up and said:

"Don't you see that notice nailed up there?"

"D'yez mane thot bit av painted tin?"

"To be sure I do. Why don't you follow it?"

"Oi haven't sane it move yit. Oi'm considherin' ut's nailed fasht!"

"I mean, have you read that notice?"

"Divil a bit, shure an' I don't know how to rade."

"It says, 'No smoking allowed.'"

"Shure an' ut doesn't concern me thin, for Oi niver 'shmoked aloud' in me loife!"

An Irishman hearing of a wonderful musician, decided to take lessons of him.

On his learning that the terms were six dollars the first month and one dollar the second month, he said:

"Thin, begobs! Oi'll cum the sicond month."

An Irishman was once standing on London Bridge when he saw a boy whom he thought he knew, and said

"Me by, whut's you're name? Faith an' Oi think Oi know yez. Whut's you're name?"

"Jones," replied the boy.

"Jones, Jones, Jones. Sure an' I knew siveteen ould maids be' thot name in Dublin. Was aither av them you're mither?"

An Irishman on being asked if he spoke French, said: "Yis, av ut's shpoke in Oirish."

A Bunch of Fun.

(By Henry Hofmeister, Md.)

Raymond is a little boy who lives in the city and has seen very little of the country. One day he went on a visit to his grandpa's farm. While out in the pasture he saw the cows chewing their cud. Not knowing what it meant, he ran to his grandpa, saying:

"Grandpa, do you have to buy gum for all of those cows?"

"I'm not afraid of my hens now," said Hungerford.

"Afraid of your hens?" repeated Williams. "What a ridiculous idea. What do you mean?"

"They are not laying for me."

She: "I don't see how you men can stay bachelors. Don't all these girls in their pretty party dresses look alluring?"

He: "Oh, yes, very; but I have a sure antidote."

She: "Why, what is it?"

He: "Thinking of what they cost."

"You won't forget to give him the medicine every two hours?"

"Oh, no, sir! Why, half an hour before its time he's hollerin' that he won't take it."

"Why does your father always go to the theatre when a thrilling melodrama is to be played?"

"Well, you see, he's bald, and has heard such plays spoken of as 'hair-raisers.'"

The Two Bootblacks.

(By J. A. Delehanty, N. Y.)

In Milwaukee, a day or two ago, during a slight lull in business, two little bootblacks, one black and the other white, were standing at the corner of Second and Flinders streets, doing nothing, when the white bootblack agreed to black the black bootblack's boots. The black bootblack was, of course, willing to have his boots blacked by his fellow bootblack and the bootblack who had agreed to black the bootblack's boots went to work.

When the bootblack had blacked one of the black bootblack's boots till it shone in a manner that would make any bootblack proud, this bootblack who had agreed to black the black bootblack's boot, refused to black the other boot of the black bootblack unless the black bootblack, who had consented to have the white bootblack black his boots, should add five cents to the amount the white bootblack had made blacking other men's boots.

This the black bootblack whose boot had been blacked re-

fused to do, saying it was good enough for a black bootblack to have one boot blacked, and he didn't care whether the boot that the bootblack hadn't blacked was blacked or not.

This made the bootblack who had blacked the black bootblack's boot as angry as a bootblack often gets, and he vented his black wrath by spitting upon the blacked boot of the black bootblack.

This roused the latent passions of the black bootblack and he proceeded to boot the white bootblack with the boot which the white bootblack had blacked.

A fight then ensued in which the white bootblack who had refused to black the unblackened boot of the black bootblack, blacked the black bootblack's visionary organ, and in which the black bootblack wore all the blacking off his blacked boot in booting the white bootblack.

Waiting for the Jailer.

(By C. Elmer Trautner.)

At Indianapolis there is no regular jailor. A few months ago a policeman took a prisoner to jail and being unable to get admittance, requested him to wait until he found the jailor. The man leaned against the fence and waited for an hour. No jailor came. It was intensely cold, and he grumbled outright.

His manners attracted some persons passing that way, who inquired what was the matter. The poor fellow said:

"That darned officer told me to wait until he got the key to put me in, and I'm nearly froze."

"Why don't you leave?" asked three or four at once.

"Can't; told him I would wait," was the reply.

By hard persuasion, the crowd got him to believe that it was not dishonorable to break his word in such a case, and he left the inhospitable mansion.

Patience Tried.

(By H. Gundershermer, Wash.)

It was a northbound train traveling through the State of New York.

"Next station Peekskill!" cried the conductor as he passed through the cars.

As he came to an old lady with a shrill voice he heard her say:

"Conductor, have we come to Poughkeepsie yet?"

"No," answered the conductor, in a mild tone. "I just said Peekskill, lady."

"Thank you," she answered, in a piped voice.

At that station all those passengers who wished got off and again the train started off.

After a fifteen-minute pause, the conductor again went his rounds, calling this time "Fishkill" instead of "Peekskill."

Again that shrill voice piped, "Conductor, have we come to Poughkeepsie yet?"

"No, didn't I just tell you the next station was 'Fishkill?'" roared the conductor, in anger.

"Well, I thought it was Poughkeepsie," she said.

"I took care," cried the conductor, now fully worked up. "I will tell you what I'll do, lady."

"What will you do?"

"I will let you off at Poughkeepsie, and if I fail to do so I'll back the train. Upon my word, lady."

With this fact assured her, she sat silent for the next four stations, but then she got impatient and again asked, "Conductor, are we at Poughkeepsie yet?"

The conductor flushed and said, "I have forgotten to let you off at Poughkeepsie, but I'll keep my word and back the train."

So, true to his word, he backed the train to the station, which just happened to be the one sought.

"Now, lady," he said, "we are at Poughkeepsie."

"Thank you," she said, and stopped as if to pick up her satchel, but, instead, she drew from it a bottle and spoon, and thus answered the collector of tickets:

"I am much obliged to you for your trouble, but my daughter told me to take my medicine at Poughkeepsie."

A Few Jokes.

(By Harold McKenzie, Ill.)

"And now, Mrs. Sullivan," said Lawyer Thomson, "will you be kind enough to tell the jury whether your husband was in the habit of striking you with impunity?"

"Wid what, sir?"

"With impunity."

"He wuz, sur, now an' thin; but he sthruke me ofthener wid his fist."

A judge, pointing with his cane to a prisoner before him, remarked:

"There is a great rogue at the end of this stick."

"At which end, your honor?" asked the prisoner.

"Now," said Lawyer Gilbrath, of Erie, who was questioning a witness, "I want you to answer precisely every question I ask you. Will you do it?"

"I will, sir."

"Now, what business do you follow?"

"I'm a driver, sir."

"That is—you drive a wagon?"

"No, sir, I do not."

"Why, sir, did you not tell me so this moment?"

"No, sir, I did not."

"Now, sir, I put to you on your oath, do you drive a wagon?"

"No, sir."

"What is your occupation, then?"

"I drive a horse."

Evolution of a Lemon.

(By Isaac Gealt, Pa.)

"What is your name, little boy?" asked the teacher.

"Johnny Lemon," answered the boy, and so it was recorded on the roll.

"What is your name?" the high school teacher inquired.

"John Dennis Lemon," replied the big boy, which was duly entered.

"Your name, sir?" said the college dignitary.

"J. Deunison Lemon," responded the young man, who was about to enroll himself as a student. Inscribed in accordance therewith.

"May I ask your name?" inquired the society editor of the *Daily Bread*.

"Jean D'Einnice Le Mon," replied the swell personage in the opera box, and it was duly jotted down.

How Esau Sawed.

(By Howard Kanagy, Ill.)

An old farmer whose sons had all grown up and left home hired a young man by the name of Esau Buck to help around the farm. On the eve of the day following they hauled a load of logs up for wood. The next morning the old man said:

"Esau, I am going to town to-day and while I am gone you saw up the wood and keep the ram out of the garden."

When the old man had gone Esau went out to saw the wood, but when he saw the saw he saw he couldn't saw with that saw. When he saw that he couldn't saw with that saw he wouldn't saw it.

Esau looked around for another saw, but when he saw that that saw was the only saw he saw he didn't saw it. When the old man came home he said:

"Esau, did you saw the wood?"

Esau said:

"I saw the wood, but I didn't saw it, for when I saw the saw I saw that I couldn't saw with that saw."

When the old man saw the saw he saw that Esau couldn't saw with that saw. Then Esau saw that the old man saw he couldn't saw with that saw Esau picked up an ax and chopped up the wood and made a see-saw.

The next morning the old man went to town and bought a new bucksaw for Esau Buck and brought it home and laid it on the saw buck by the see-saw. About this time Esau saw the buck in the garden eating cabbages. In driving the buck from the garden to the barnyard Esau Buck saw the new bucksaw on the sawbuck by the see-saw and stopped to examine it. The bucksaw Esau Buck stopped to examine the new bucksaw on the sawbuck by the see-saw, and made a dive at Esau, missed Esau, knocked the see-saw onto the bucksaw on the sawbuck. The old man saw the buck make a dive at Esau, miss Esau and knock the see-saw on to the bucksaw on the sawbuck and picked up the ax to kill the buck.

The buck saw the old man coming and dodged the blow and made an encounter on the old man's stomach, knocking the old man onto Esau Buck, who was just getting up off the bucksaw on the sawbuck by the see-saw, crippling Esau Buck and breaking the bucksaw and the sawbuck and the see-saw.

When the buck saw the completeness of his victory over the old man and Esau Buck, and saw the broken bucksaw and sawbuck by the see-saw he quietly turned around and finished eating his cabbages.

The old farmer and Esau Buck had to lay around the

house for a week and read nothing but the Nick Carter Weekly, because they said that was the best they could find.

Stands for Mary.

(By Gustave Reinhardt, Md.)

At a village school, not many miles from Canterbury, a precocious boy being asked to parse the sentence, "Mary, milk the cow," went on accurately till he came to the last word, when he said:

"Cow is a pronoun, feminine gender, third person, stands for Mary."

"Stands for Mary?" asked the master, in astonishment.

"Yes, sir!" responded the urchin, with a grin, "for if the cow didn't stand for Mary, how could Mary milk the cow?"

Irish Every Time.

(By Chas. Newcomb, Iowa.)

Pat and Mike had just landed, and all their money had been spent for tickets on the steamer. Their bed that night was by a railroad track. About 12 o'clock that night a passenger train came by. Mike who was not a very sound sleeper, woke up.

He woke up Pat by this howl:

"Get up, Pat, they're moving hell, and there goes the first load."

Pat got up and fled, and Mike chased after him, but could not find him. The next day after his exciting experience he picked up a dime with a hole in it on the street. He was told he could get a good one for it in a lank across the street. Mike went in but only got a nickel for it on account of the hole. The next day he found another dime with a hole in it. He picked it up and threw it across the street and cried out as he threw it:

"Ye dom little divvil, ye, I lost a nickel on ye the other day."

How He Escaped.

(By Julius Meyer, N. Y.)

"Were you ever shot, colonel?" asked a young lady.

"Once only a bullet struck me right here," putting his hand over his heart.

"Dear me!" she cried. "Why didn't it kill you? That is where your heart is."

"There," returned the colonel, "is where my heart is now, but at the time I was shot fortunately enough my heart was in my mouth."

A Few From Ohio.

(By Ed. Anderson, Ohio.)

Miss Accum (to new scholar): "Johnnie, can you tell me who made those large hills and green fields you see out there?"

Johnnie (new boy): "No um; we jist move here."

Lady: "And what is your profession?"

Tramp: "Lady, I am a contortionist."

Lady: "Then go to the woodpile and do the split."

Lady (after giving a tramp a portion of a small biscuit): "This is the last time I will open my door to feed a tramp."

Tramp: "Madam, you didn't have to open your door, you might have shoved this through the keyhole."

A Wise Scotchman.

(By G. Bigelow, Ill.)

A Scotchman got on a train at New York one day and after getting fixed in his seat he put his feet on the heaters. After a while he would take off one foot and then the other, and finally he took off his shoes and then he took off his socks, turned them wrong side out and put them on again and replaced his shoes.

A Yankee sitting behind him, his curiosity overcoming him, asked him why he did it. The Scotchman replied:

"For some unaccountable reason my feet got so hot I thought they were on fire, so I turned the hose on them."

In a Bunch.

(By Frank McKeon, Ill.)

An Irish jockey, who was "fetlock deep in the turf," being elated with his success at winning a race, observed: "Be me soul, I'm first at last—I've always been behind before."

What's the difference between a butcher and a young lady?

Answer—The former kills to dress, while the latter dresses to kill.

A very small boy was trying to lead a big St. Bernard up the road.

"What are you going to do with that dog?" asked a kindly gentleman.

"I can't make up my mind," was the answer, "not till I find out what the dog thinks o' doin' with me!"

His Excuse.

Mother: "Mercy me! you've been in swimming too long. Your teeth are chattering."

Her Son: "They—is—is loose, anyhow."

What a Country.

(By Chas. Wenzels, Pa.)

Two Irishmen recently arrived in "Ameriky," were traveling along a country road one cold morning when, as they were passing a house, their conversation was interrupted by the sudden appearance of several dogs.

Pat seized hold of a stone, but finding it frozen fast to the ground he exclaimed:

"Jasus, what a country! The shtones are tied fast and the dogs are tied loose."

For Supper.

In a grocery, as elsewhere, the general rule is, "First come, first served," but, of course, the rule has to be broken in cases of emergency.

Small Boy: "Come, hurry up and get my things! Mother wants them for supper."

Clerk: "What will you have, sir?"

Small Boy: "A bar of soap and a roll of stove polish."

LETTER FROM A PRIZE WINNER.

Here's a letter from another of those boys who were lucky enough to win a banjo in the last contest. Charles Grissom is the boy in this case. He knows how to tell a good funny story:

If he can play the banjo as well he must be good company.

Success to you, Charlie.

PENTON, Tex.

Messrs. Street & Smith, New York City—

Gentlemen: Yours of recent date, informing me that I had won one of the first prizes offered by you for the best story from one of your readers, came yesterday morning. The banjo also arrived by the same train by express.

Permit me to express my sincere thanks to you for the instrument, which I consider a very good one. It will always cause me to have pleasant thoughts of the givers.

Again thanking you for your kindness and wishing you all the success possible, I remain,

Respectfully yours,
CHARLES GRISSOM.

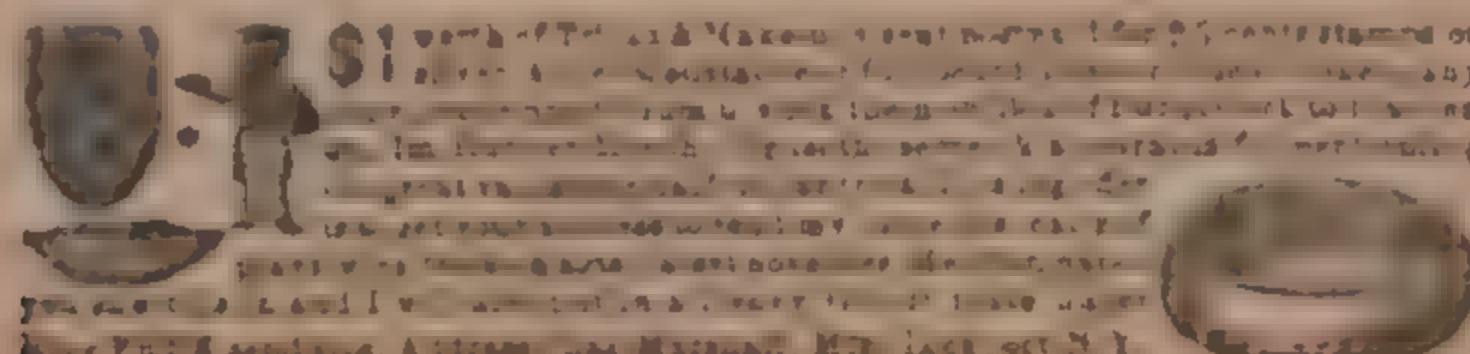
Stamp and Coin Department.

CORRESPONDENCE.

J. H. D., Jr.—The specimens you send have absolutely no value.

M. Laverne Corbin, Stat. B, Grand Rapids, Mich., will exchange Nick Carter and other novels for stamps, coins, curios or anything of equal value. Write for numbers.

George Robertson, General Delivery, Mesilla, New Mexico, wishes to exchange five cent novels of Jesse James or Buffalo Bill for other novels. He has magazines also. All letters answered.



A SPLENDID

PRIZE CONTEST.

It is to Laugh!

Of course you all like funny stories—the kind you have been reading lately in the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. If you can write any like them send them in, that is if you want

A FIRST RATE UP-TO-DATE BANJO,
A SPLENDID ALL-WOOL SWEATER,
OR LONG DISTANCE MEGAPHONES.

3 First Prizes The three boys who send us the three funniest stories will each receive a first-class banjo. A beautiful instrument. Perfect and up-to-date in every detail. These banjos are warranted in every particular. They have 11-inch calf heads, walnut necks and veneered finger boards, with celluloid inlaid position dots, raised frets, twenty-four nickel brackets and wired edge. These instruments can be easily mastered, and every boy should jump at the opportunity to win one.

5 Second Prizes The five boys who send us the next funniest stories will each receive a Spalding all-wool sweater. Any color you choose. Guaranteed all wool and full shaped to the body and arms.

10 Third Prizes The ten boys who send us the next funniest stories will each receive a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone, capable of carrying the sound of the human voice two miles.

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS:

This contest will close May 1st. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

To become a contestant for these prizes you must cut out the Prize Contest Coupon printed herewith; fill it out properly, and send it to NICK CARTER WEEKLY, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your story. No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON.

Nick Carter Weekly Prize Contest No 2.

Date 1902

Name

City or Town

State

Title of Story

Amateur Detective Work.

Boys, in reading one of the Nick Carter stories did you ever try to think ahead and guess who was the criminal in the case?

Each of the readers has a chance to find out how good a detective he is.

He has the facts of the case laid before him just as Nick Carter himself has.

Of course, he has not got Nick's experience or wonderful detective instinct. Still, he can prove whether or not he is a good detective by trying to decide in his own mind what the solution of the mystery is before he has read to the end of the story. The earlier in the story he is able to make his guess and the more accurate it is, the better detective he is.

We want to see what sort of detectives the readers of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY are.

We want one and all of you to write to us, telling us whether you were able to solve the mystery that Nick Carter had to solve before reading to the end of any of the stories.

Tell us how far you read before you arrived at your decision, and *just what points guided you in making your decision*. Your letters will be printed in this column.

Here is a letter from Jean Stillwell, of Bay Ridge, L. I. He shows himself a rattling good amateur detective.
Editor of Nick Carter—

Dear Sir: I have read the previous letters written by Nick Carter readers in regard to Amateur Detective Work, and they have interested me greatly.

I have always been interested in detective work, and for years I have been a warm admirer of Nick Carter, who I consider the greatest detective the world has ever known.

I think that his methods are the only proper methods for a detective to use. Patsy and Chick, I think, are both apt pupils, and bid fair to be almost as good as Nick himself in time.

I have just finished reading No. 273, entitled, "Nick Carter in Canada; or, Showing the Way to a Treacherous Guide."

What a rattling good story that is! From the moment that Chick cornered the tough who attacked him in London I began to have my suspicions.

You see the man did not behave like an ordinary thug. He had an alertness, quickness and strength that made me think he had led an active outdoor life in some wild, half-savage country.

Then another thought entered my brain: What could have been his object in attacking Chick? Clearly, it was not to rob him. The man wished, evidently, to prevent him from sailing to America.

The only man who could have such an object in view would be one of the Canadian gold thieves. This man's activity showed that he was a backwoodsman—a Canadian, perhaps. From that point my mind was made up. The remainder of the story showed that my guess was right.

A Lobster.

(By J. Earle Sutton, Pa.)

A certain young official at the city hall has decided never again to allow his temper to get ruffled when at the telephone. The other day, upon not getting the number, desired, he hollered, "See here, Central, I'll report you."

"You don't know who I am," was the composed reply.

All honor is due to Chick for his great work in Canada.

Three cheers for him, as well as for the other Carters!

Yours truly,

Bay Ridge, L. I.

JEAN STILLWELL.

That's a good letter, Jean—a corker in every way. You have shown fine judgment all through it. Let us hear from you again.

Here's another good letter. It comes from a Western boy, Roy Browning, of Omaha.

Editor of Nick Carter Weekly—

Dear Sir: I have just heard about your Amateur Detective Circle and I want you to put my name in right away.

I've been reading the story about "Nick Carter's Ocean Chase," and I began to have my suspicions about Palog from the time when he called on Nick.

His manner when he visited Nick at his house was peculiar, to say the least. There was something queer about the man.

Then again, his wild talk about his capture of the diamond set me thinking.

He was just the man, I thought, to steal the diamond.

His manner showed that he was a thief, and the stealing of the diamond and the attempted murder of Patsy were clearly the deeds of a crank—and a crank of the most dangerous order.

Yours truly,

ROY BROWNING.

Good boy, Roy! You're a credit to Omaha.

"Well, I'll find out and that dam—er—blame quick, too," he shouted back.

"I know you, though, you're an official at the City Hall. I've seen your picture," came back those same sweet, even tones.

"Where? In the newspapers?" he asked, falling headlong into the trap.

"No," replied the still, small voice, "on a lobster can."

NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

(LARGE SIZE.)

The Best Detective Stories in the World.

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269—Nick Carter's Advertisement; or, A New Way to Catch a Criminal.
270—Nick Carter and the Nihilists; or, The Mine Under the Grand Duke's Palace.
271—Nick Carter in the Convict Gang; or, Ida Jones to the Rescue.
272—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor; or, The American Detective and the Russian Officer.
273—Nick Carter in Canada; or, Showing the Way to a Treacherous Guide.
274—Nick Carter and the Smugglers; or, Thief-Catching on the Border.
275—Nick Carter's Enemy; or, Bringing a Murderer to the Gallows.

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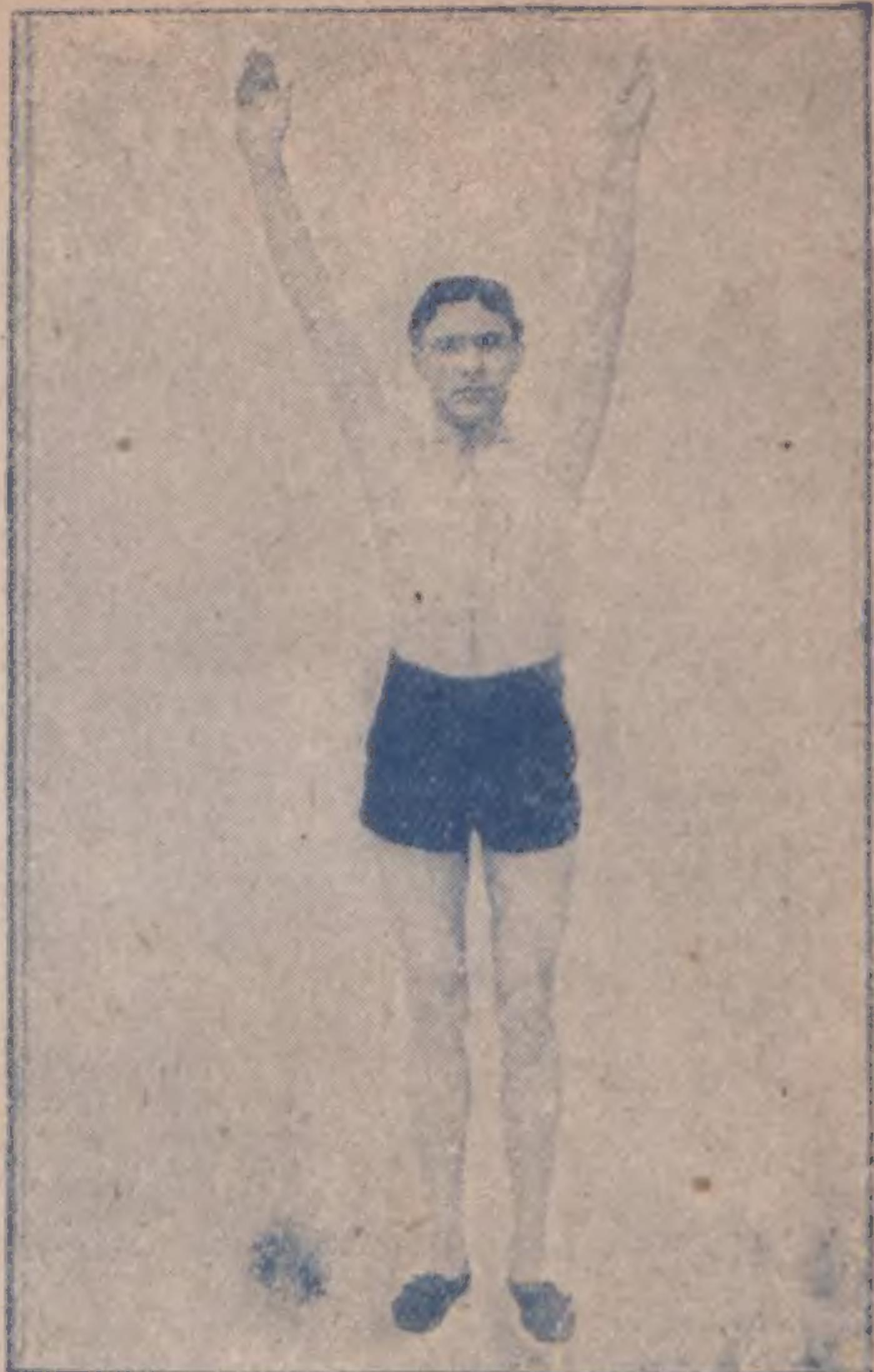
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